Ch 1-50 Kansutoppu!

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Full Text Arc 1

Here is all of Arc 1! Enjoy reading!

Prologue – What Awaited Me On The Lowest Floor

Finally, I reached the 100th floor.
I wonder how long it has been since then?
When I was a kid, I couldn't even win against an animal that resembled a monster.
On the contrary, I was nearly killed a lot of times.
I missed the time where I used a wooden stick that was laying around to practice my swings.
When the village still existed, what I used to wear was frowned upon.
Far from fighting against demons, we didn't even go out of the village.
At that time I'd been a child and it certainly was dangerous outside, so that was natural.
However,
Right now, I couldn't think about the the good old days.

Ever since the day the village was burned down, I continued to walk mindlessly until I noticed that I was in front of a cave.
If you think about it, normally I should have died already.
I wonder why I was able to get this far, I don't understand.
Maybe I was still determined to survive.

There is something waiting at the bottom of the stairs
I wonder what it is? At the 90th floor, I was fighting against a huge snake with terrifying speed.
It was going around in circles with high speed, drawing a spiral and surrounding the entire area.
As if it was shaving the ground, everything on its way was swallowed.
Next, it used paralysis and poison, I wonder if that was its specialty.
Strangely I'm not scared, but such things won't work on me anyways.
Even I, who doesn't know how to read the alphabet, knows that this situation was abnormal from the start.
I don't remember how I was able to understand my circumstances.

When I descended the stairs, there was white bearded old man.

"No way, someone came…"

I was surprised for a moment, but the old man squinted his eyes and showed a gentle smile.
Someone, someone is here.
For a long time, for some reason I haven't been able to talk to someone else so I'm not sure If I was able to talk properly.

"I'm talking to you, do you understand me?
I don't know how much time has passed

for Humans can only live for about 100 years”

I wonder what I should say?
Apart from that, I wonder where the floor boss is?
Usually when I go down to a certain extent, a boss monster would appear.
This time I expected something, ….possibly.

“Now now, those annoying humans probably won’t be able to drive me away to the bottom of the earth again, so now would be a good time, I should consider that.
If I appropriately spend another several hundred years…soon the lifespan of that hero clan will reach its limit. They should have died out by then.”

Suddenly, the old man’s body grew big.
From the corner of its shoulder and from the corner of its head, the color of its skin changed to black.
His thin and slender arms began to expand two fold of its original size and blood vessels began to rise. The color of his eyes changed to dark red.
Just like that, its demon-like body grew twice as big as me.
Its roar was able to destroy the surrounding walls and the pillars just by its wind pressure.
I thought I was going to be blown away, but somehow I was able to withstand it.

“I am the King of Destruction. Once, I destroyed the world and ruled all living things. There was an era where I instilled terror.
Some time ago before I became senile, I had the figure of a king ruling over the humans. I ruled over the humans and raised despair.”

<King of Destruction> he says, something like that is just a step forward on my way.and I have no idea what he had been saying at all.

“Did you think that there was a treasure? If that’s the case too bad!”
“No, its something else”
“There is only despair and death here. However, be relieved, I’ll put effort in giving you as little pain as possible……KAAAAA!!”

【I call upon the King of Destruction Vanda Lucia the Catastrophe!】

One by one orbs of light appeared in the air. If I think about it, it seems that one by one they will start to enlarge and then explode.
Though instead of causing an explosion, erasing is closer to the result.
The orbs began to swallow the floors and the pillars, annihilating and gouging any obstacles leaving a sphere shape.
While I was running, the orbs began to appear one after another behind me in a line as if giving chase.
Without change, I aimed at the King of Destruction. Suddenly at that time an orb appeared, cutting off my attack.
I tried my best to roll down to escape from the explosion of the orb, but I suddenly got chill when I saw the King of Destruction’s fearless smile.

[A foolish choice]

The King of Destruction pointed his finger to me, and simultaneously the orb exploded.
I was almost too late too realize it, and the explosion happened.
I roll away from the orb that exploded which took a part of the meat on my shoulder, it was swallowed.

【Ryua received 9321 damage!】
【Ryua HP 31129 / 40450】

Although I had trained a considerable amount, being unmindful of that orb which is able to do such thing…even though it hurt I'm not afraid. Though certainly if more than one orb appears like that my method of escaping will disappear.

"Sonic Ripper!!"

【Ryua fired Sonic Ripper!】

I swing my attack towards the King of Destruction which destroyed the ground as it passed through.
It's a long range attack, therefore its power is somewhat low, however it is useful in a one way defensive battle.

"Hou. . . "

It was somewhat admirable to do in this state, however the King of Destruction slowly held out his hands towards me and then a orb appeared before my attack.
My attack disappeared along with the explosion of the orb.
However,
【King of Destruction Vanda Lucia received no damage!】
【King of Destruction Vanda Lucia　HP　320000/320000　】

Its no good, I have no choice other than close combat.
I was thinking of using some magic but, its probably useless since it will end the same way as before.
That orb's power is immensely strong however, the King of Destruction won't be safe if he gets involve in the explosion. Therefore, in close combat he won't easily be able to make the orb.
But this situation is more serious than i thought.
Because of the damage on my shoulder from before, my dominant hand is unusable.
As expected from the the lowest floor boss, even though I was able to instant kill the 95th floor boss this one is incomparably strong.
I glanced to the left,
and just as i thought, The King of Destruction's orb appears in that direction.
Without changing my view, in an instant, I recklessly ran with all my might to the opposite direction cutting a thousand times.
I assume that even the King of Destruction won't be able to react to my speed.

Before I attacked with my sword, I kick the ground just to close a little more distance.
I avoided the attack of the King of Destruction by gouging out his flank.
Dodging by hair's breadth, I wasn't able to move any further.

"GUUUAAAAH~"

【Ryua charged attack! damaged 128455 to The King of Destruction Vanda Lucia】
【King of Destruction Vanda Lucia HP 191545/320000】

"Gu , gufa"

The King of Destruction was on his knees, breathing heavily.
Then, something was released from his huge arm towards me and I moved to intercept it.

【The King of Destruction Vanda Lucia release a countless number of blades from his hand】

The situation will be the same as earlier if I evade this, I don't have any time to hesitate. Even though it will be able to kill me, I have the resolution to rush forward even if i get damaged.
The released blades hits my body

【Ryua receive 3292 damage!】
【Ryua receive 2010 damage!】
【Ryua receive 850 damage!】
【Ryua receive 1241 damage!】
【Ryua HP 23736/40450]】

"tooryaaaaaah!"

The sword i got from the 95th floor cut the protruding hand of the King of Destruction and he was cut into two.

【Ryua's attack damaged 191546 to The King of Destruction!】
【The King of Destruction Vanda Lucia HP 0/32000】

"I was careless . . . .su-such as myself. . . .. not something like a hero . . . . . but a little girl . . . . . uboaaaaaaaaa!!"

An explosion of light was released from the cut I left on The King of Destruction's arm and torso.
It seems like my weapon's added effect did this.

【The King of Destruction Vanda Lucia was defeated】

Nothing was left after the explosion.
If I hadn't stepped back, it probably would have gotten dangerous for me.

"I-I won . . . "

【Ryua receive 999999 experience value!】
【Ryua level went up to 2216!】

"Ah, so that's it"

100th floor cleared.
I didn't believe it myself.
I didn't know how dangerous this dungeon was, but I was able to finally conquer a dungeon.
When I was a kid, something like a dungeon was something I knew from picture books.
Finally . . . . . .

"I-I did it. . . .I did it~~!!"

I'm so happy that I want to jump up and down, No, I am already jumping up and down.
My body hurts so much that i want to cry, but
I didn't notice that there was a treasure box enshrined nearby, I hurriedly ran toward it
I want to show this to Dad and Mom, and Kurinka.
However, I understand that i won't be able to.

Chapter 1 – Now to the Outside World!

"Ryua-chan what do you want to become when you grow up?"
"An adventurer!"
"Eh, it's dangerous. There are a lot of demons that have killed many humans, papa said so."
"But it's more boring staying in the village, you know."

I stood up from where i was sitting and threw a stone horizontally, then it sank in the river.I had tried to let it skip over the water surface, but failed.
Kurinka-chan sitting next to me didn't seem to notice, she continued speaking to me without caring about it. Her blonde, silken hair fluttered in the wind.

"Really? If that's the case I wonder if me and Ryua-chan can be adventurers together"
"Didn't you yourself just say it's dangerous?"
"I think you'll be fine if I go with you."

The sunset was shining upon the center of the water's surface. We would talk with each other before dinner like this every day.
Afterwards we would respectively return home to eat a meal and sleep on a warm bed.

The houses in the village were being dyed with red.
The wooden walls crumbling from the flames.
The heat from the fires scorching the earth.
The skewered villagers who had fought with clubs or sickles.
The monsters I had never seen before.
I cried and screamed.
Father, Mother, Kurinka.
I did nothing but run to escape.

An extremely ugly monster showed up and stood in my way.
When the monster was about to brandish his weapon, its arm suddenly went flying.

“Hurry!! Run!!”

A travelling swordsman that has stopped by the village a short while ago saved me in the end.
While I was cowering, I was urged many times by the swordsman to run away.

“There is no need to worry! I will save them all!”

Thinking back, I believed his words so I was determined to escape.
When I was running, at that moment I looked back and saw that spectacle.

A one winged demon and the swordsman were. . . . . .

//////

I woke up when I heard the sound of the stream.
I wiped off the tears that were on my face and gradually I came to my senses.
At the moment I left the cave, the fatigue that was plaguing me dissipated.
Thanks to an item at the lowest floor, I was able to return instantly so I was not tired.
When I defeated the King of Destruction, a treasure box appeared with an unusual ribbon inside it.
That demon, protecting something like this? It makes me laugh a little thinking about it.
Who knows what kind of effect it has but for now I don’t know.

“I finally get to depart from this place?”

It is very hard for a human to reach this dungeon which is surrounded by many tall mountains, and it also has 100 underground floors.
After approaching it I felt a mysterious, peculiar atmosphere.
I wonder how I was able to bear going to such place when I was a child, the more I think about it the less I understand.

“First of all I have to get out of this place, let’s start moving.”

I started with a light jog, running past the trees.
On the way i jumped off a cliff, and landing on a slope I earnestly run forward.
At that moment, something black jumped out from the bushes.

【Hellbear appeared!】

As I thought, there are monsters all over the outside world.
But it’s not scary at all, such a thing is probably from around the 10th floor that I already fought through.

【Hellbear swung its big arm!】

I stopped it with one hand. At this level a weapon is not necessary.
As I made my left hand into a fist, I expressed my sympathy to the bear monster.

【Ryua attacked! Hellbear received 3022 damage!】

【Hellbear HP 0/1430】

The bear fell from where it stood with a loud thud.
Still, I wonder if it was a weak monster.

【Hellbear was defeated!】
【Ryua received 2096 experience!】

"I'm in good condition. . . . I think?"

I tried cracking my fingers and my neck.
After this lets go somewhere, perhaps I can try searching for a place where people live.
For now I need to cross over this mountain.
Along the way, no matter how many monsters attacked I ignored them and ran away.
While there were some that chased after me, none were able to catch up with my pace.

"I wonder if I became stronger since the monsters in this area are not a big deal… Now which way to go?"

I've been running continuously for 2 hours.
When I originally crossed the mountain I passed through a forest, and under a cliff was a wide grassland with a town in the distance.
I was covered in a pleasant breeze blowing towards me, it was like I was being blessed by it.
I ran down the cliff at once, I can see a town in sight.
What should I do first when I arrive at the town?
First of all I should return to the village.
I don't even want to remember what happened, but I want to make a grave for father and mother.
And, if possible, it would be good if there are any clues regarding the one-winged demon.

The town has houses made of brick in a line, it was more developed than the village where I lived.
I see an old woman carrying fruits over her head, a man and a woman having an enjoyable chat while walking.
There's an old guy carrying a really massive axe and an old man with a walking stick.
The town is overflowing with many, many people.

I haven't seen such a thing before.
Now that I have grown, I didn't know what I should do and I was puzzled.
Because I haven't spoken in a long time, I don't know what to say or how to properly speak.
While I was busy being flustered, someone bumped against my back.

"You'll be a hindrance if you just stand there, can you get out of the way?"

“eh. . .ah . . . so-sorry”

I haven’t talked for a very long time, and now I feel overwhelmed.
However, no matter how long I wait I won’t reach a conclusion by myself.
I gave up thinking and tried asking the person walking by about the location of the village.

“Um, do you know which way Ikana village is?”
“Huh?”

I saw a man with white eyes carrying a wood on his shoulder.
He said he was too busy to talk and then he continued walking.
On the contrary, somehow I felt like I was being stared at.

“I wonder if i said anything weird?”

The next person I asked did not know.
And another, I still received the same response.

“Wh-what should i do?”

While I was standing there worried, I overheard someone else.

“First of all we should go to the adventurers guild”
“I wonder if there are any good quests, the dungeons here were conquered a long time ago”

Adventurer, dungeon.
After hearing those interesting words, I went after them.

Chapter 2 – Dream and Reality

The 2 guys I followed went inside a building. Going inside myself, I see people with various appearances. First I noticed the old guy with the massive axe from earlier, then a magician-like person wearing a thick hat mumbling something, and 3 guys having a friendly chat.
Though for some reason a fight is happening inside right now.

“That’s why! Didn’t you say that escorting would be perfectly safe?”
“The client got injured. I didn’t say that it was safe, and so I will receive my half of the payment.”
“Do you think that he got out with minor injuries? Isn’t it good that he was able to arrive alive!”
“I didn’t say it was that safe.”

A man carrying a spear and a person wearing glasses were sitting at the counter.
As I was watching the situation they became surrounded by people.
Among the crowd a big old guy came out and approached the guy with the spear.

“Oi oi, that’s unsightly. Try and read the details of the request again, it’s written here that “I

want you to safely escort me and my baggage to the Aganbalt Kingdom". that. Means. No matter what, nothing must happen to the client."

The old guy carrying the axe broke in to enter, appearing to say something reprimanding to the guy with the spear.

"Don't you worry about the safety of the person's life?"

The spearguy glared at the axeguy.
The old guy continued to talk to Speardude without being scared.

"Hey you, it hasn't been long since you have become an adventurer. Your armor and even your boots, on top of it being brand new all of it is just cheap If you are already a veteran you should have better equipment."
"Even so, what of it?"
"I wonder if you understand, despite paying the quest fees. Complaining won't change the rewards."
"Old geezer pretending to be a veteran . . . . . ."

Speardude is fiddling with the spear on his back.
The surrounding crowd began to make a stir, the old guy sighed in disappointment at the situation and posed as if giving up on stopping the situation.

"Fighting is strictly forbidden here. We should talk outside, I'll listen to whatever what you want to say."
"Bring it on!"

Then Speardude and Axeman went outside. Should I watch the fight?
It's somehow different from what I imagined.
Although both of them are adventurers, I wonder why they look so dangerous.
I cocked my head to think. I should go the counter they were sitting earlier and ask about Ikana village.

"Excuse me, do you happen to know where Ikana village is?"
"Please show me your adventurer's card. A guild card is good too."
"Eh, whats that?
"Ah, do you happen to be a beginner?"

I don't really know what's going on, so I should reply with a nod.

"To utilize the guild, adventurers should first register. It's a simple procedure, would you like to do it now?"

Some paper was placed in front of me, it seems I need to write some information on it.

First my name. . . . . .um?
This is a serious matter.
Really. . . . . .

“Is there something wrong?”

I became rigid when the guild person curiously asked me that.

“Um… I…”
“Yes?”
“It’s just that, I don’t know how to write.”
“Eh?… EEH?”

After I escaped from the village, I didn’t meet anyone but went straight to the dungeon.
Normally children will be taught but due to the circumstances I don’t how to do it at all.
The adventurers in the area overheard and looked towards me.
And then they laughed.

“Seriously, how have you been living until now?”
“That’s just impossible.”
“Well, at least it seems like you have a good head on your shoulders.”

I hear contempt and scorn from my surroundings.
I didn’t know what to do, so I looked towards the guild person as if complaining.

“Then, there wasn’t anyone that you received directions from on how to write, right?”
There is no one like that. I searched around the area to look for someone that can write for me.

“Hey, write for me.”
“No way~, I don’t want to get a monkey brain from you.”

Everyone began to silently whisper to each other, all while looking at me.
No wants seem to want to write for me.

“H-how about you?”
“I’m not allowed to write due to our policies.”
“C-can’t anyone here write for me?”

No one answered.
It’s sad and regrettable, I’m surprised at how cold the adventurers are as my tears began to fall.
I began to tremble and shake as I hold the pen, I don’t know what or how to write.
My tears began to fall on the paper, leaving a stain on it.
At that time, the entrance door opened.

“Fu~ , that was tiring. . . . .n?”

A blonde-haired girl entered.
I wonder if we are of the same age. Her hair is bit long, reaching beyond her shoulder, divided into 2 with ties. In contrast to my short hair.

The girl has a strange atmosphere that I can sympathize with. I then noticed that she was walking towards me.

"What happened here?"
I shook my head to the side.
"Even if you shake your head. . . . ."
"Then I'll make you wobble wobble."

The guild members skillfully followed up and explained the situation.
As I thought, this person, I wonder if she will also laugh at me who can't write by myself.

"Is that so, then would you be fine if I write?"
"A-are you fine with that?"
"We should help each other when we are in trouble."

I wiped off the tears that had gathered with my arm, and I sniffled a few times to clear my nose.

"First the name, then the place where you live, and then after that .. . . . "

One by one I received instructions from the girl on what to write.

"Current address, Ikana village?"

The guild members continued to glare at the paper.
After finishing, I have to make the card.
According to the explanation from the guild person, this card is an important thing in the Adventurer's Guild. You have to present your card all the time.
Raising your rank provides many various advantages in regards to what you can do.
Low ranking adventurers are not allowed to enter any dungeon facilities, and there are also quests you can't take.
The Adventurer's Card is a very important thing because it's packed with information.

The guild person took the paper with his hand and then put his glasses on.

"I apologize but I have a question about your current residence. Are you perhaps talking about the lost village? As of right now, where are you currently living? If you are currently wandering, the name of the inn you are staying at will be fine."
"Well, until very recently I was underground in a dungeon, in the <Caves of Hell>."
"It, huh. . . . . ?"

Once more, the progress stopped as the blonde-haired girl interrupted.

"Err , Ryua-chan. About the location of the lost village of where you lived?"
"I was living in the dungeon."

Laughter leaked out from my surroundings.
They said I was crazy. That's cruel…

“Hey you, I haven’t heard anything about the dungeon <Caves of Hell>.”
“I don’t think you know, but around here there is a place called Bear Forest at Strange plains? Especially since the bear forest has a danger level of 30 it’s hard to cross over you know.”
“<Caves of Hell> you know, there’s no such dungeon.”

Why do they always make me sound like a fool…
I almost cried again.

“You’re in trouble, so since that’s the case why not come to my house?”
“Eh?”
“After this we have to go back to place we are currently living.”

“Eeh, that would work.”
It has become troublesome, the guild person quickly consented to it.

If this girl hadn’t shown up I wonder what would’ve happened.
Now I’m just determined, I still don’t now the name of the girl I am nothing but grateful to.

“Yes, you’ve completed everything. Afterwards please wait for a while for the card to be given to you.”

Finally I can take a rest. I ask the girl for her name on the spot.

“I am Roel, I live in this place.”
“Thank you, Roel. If you weren’t there I would have been in trouble.”
“That’s good. Also, Ryua-chan, you’re originally from Ikana village . . . .”
“That’s right, I intended to go to my village to see what happened to it, but, I wonder if Roel knows where it is?”
“Eh! I-I wonder what happened to it?”
Roel shut her mouth. I wonder why, earlier the guild person also said something that made me feel uneasy.
There is something regarding the ruined village, maybe it’s something bad to talk about.

“I think Ikana village was destroyed about 10 years ago? Of course the guild person would be very troubled about it.”

What did she say?

10 years?

Eh?

Chapter 3 – The Days That I Lived In The Past

10 years, I definitely heard that.
There’s no way!

Did I live underground in that dungeon for 10 years?
Though I do remember taking off the clothes I wore once they became too small.
I think my body size has grown according to my ever increasing age.
I continued to use whatever monster pelts were available to cover my body.
That's what I'm wearing now.
That's right, weren't there curious gazes toward me because of my appearance when I arrived in this town?

"Roel, do I look weird?"

"Yes, but that doesn't matter you know?"

She immediately replied as if paying no heed to it. She might not mean that but,
What a good girl.
If I think about it, Kurinka was also a kind person.
Now that I take a better look, this girl also somehow resembles her.

"Ryua-san, your card has been delivered."

I received the card from the guild person who called me.
Amazing, it even has a picture of me.

"Good for you. So first of all your rank is D and your level is. . . . .. . .it still hasn't been determined.

"Level?"

"It represents the numerical value of how strong you are. It's also the same with the dungeon's danger level. Basically the standard for comparison.

Danger level. When I was a kid, I heard it from the swordsman that saved me.
It was something like: A level 1 adventurer should go to an appropriate dungeon with a danger level of 1.
That's right, If I remember correctly didn't that person also teach me about strange conditions?

"Ryua-chan, want to try measuring your level? Once it's measured, the card will record it you know."

"Yeah, I went through a lot of trouble so I want to try"

Roel walked towards what looked like a black iron box as soon as a person came out from it.
I wonder how many other of these boxes there are here?

"Eh~, are you lying? I'm still at level 4! Isn't this thing broken?"
A man came out scratching his head, staring strongly at the iron box.

“Fufun~ just as I expected from myself. My level is already 18.”
Next a female magician with a flashy appearance came out.
She is waving her adventurer’s card as if showing it off.
【Iraza Lv: 18 Class: Wizard B rank】

“Isn’t she amazing, that person. B rank is already a veteran you know.”

“Yeah.”

“Now Ryua-chan try entering it.”

“Eh, wait a minute my heart is not ready yet.”

“Don’t worry, it’ll be fine. It isn’t going to eat you.”

I was pushed from behind and right into the iron box.
I felt something like a vibration and then a ring of light passed through my body starting from the top and moving to the bottom.
When it finished scanning me, something like a screen was projected before my eyes.
I wonder what is written on it?
The door opened. Maybe I should try asking Roel.

“Roel, how do you read this? 9998 level?”

I understand the numbers before my eyes, I don’t understand the rest of it though.

I feel like something went wrong. No way this was my level.

“Well that is… uuumm?”

After she had stared at the screen for a while, Roel called out to the guild person to ask why.

“Error 9998? This series of numbers? What in the…”
The guild person flipped and turned over the pages of a massive book with one hand, looking flustered.
Roel silently stared at this situation.

“Overflow? Well, but, the largest that this thing should measure is 100. Sorry, but it seems like it’s broken. Please try one of the other machines.”

“Understood. Ryua-chan, let’s try a that one instead.”

It was another iron box similar to before. But just like the other machine, it showed something weird.

“Ah, hmmm? Is this also broken?”

When the level 4 person saw this happening, he cried out.

“See! Look at that! As I thought that’s broken isn’t it! I thought it was weird too, you know. My real strength should have already passed over level 20. Properly do the maintenance next time! Ha! I’m outta here!”

He was a happily humming a song while trotting out the door.
The female mage from earlier, Iraza, was walking our way in a hurry.
“Wait a minute, what does that mean? Are you saying that the information this card recorded is incorrect?”

“That one is OK, it probably broke afterwards.”

“Then that’s good.”

Then she stopped tapping her foot on the floor and the clicking noise that her peculiar shoes were making stopped.

“I’m sorry, it seems like I was in a bad mood.”

“That’s fine. . . ah, that’s right”

I remembered my original goal.
Lets try asking the guild person.

“Is it fine to go to Ikana village?”

“Currently that place is in a blockade. As of now only a few people are able to go in.”

“W-why?”

“Since the village was destroyed, dangerous monsters have started to live around the area. Every adventurer that entered never returned. Afterward, the Aganbarde Kingdom established a restriction. At the present if you are not an A rank adventurer you won’t be able to go in you know.”

“A rank?! Isn’t that too much?”

“Hou~” Roel leaked out a breath. A rank seems to be very amazing.

“What should I do?”

I didn’t really know what to do and then Roel grasped my hand.

“Then, if it’s fine do you want to see my house? Or should I say our house, since I made it so your card showed that location as your address as well.”

I wonder why she’s so kind.
The other adventures are cold, while this girl is different.
Even though I look like this, why?
Once again my tears naturally overflowed.

For 10 years, that whole time, I never noticed this was missing because I focused on my aims when I was underground, but.
For human warmth to be like this.
No, I should've known this.
Its just that the last time i felt this was 10 years ago.

Chapter 4 – Forming the Beginner Party

Roel was living alone.
I wonder how many rooms there are in one building, it's said each and every person living here is different. As for me it was the first time I've seen this kind of place.
The room is reasonably wide with a bed and a kitchen connected to the bath.
On the bed, a lovely plush toy was there.

"Sorry that it's quite small."

"So, you live alone?"

"Yeah…"

Just like that I felt that Roel's facial expression turned gloomy.
I don't understand why, but let's not pursue it any further.

"Is it fine for me to stay here? We just met today…"

"It's lonely by myself."

Roel turned her face away a little.
That gesture somehow resembles the moment whenever Kurinka was lying.
Just as I thought, I should change the topic.

"Roel, you are an adventurer right? Do you have a card?"

"Of course I have one."

【Roel | Lv: 2 | Class: Healer | Rank: D】

Then she quickly gave me an explanation.

"I can only take simple quests and I can't even complete some of them. I was only able to finish one quest today."

Somehow it seems that I'll start living like this.
Healer is a class that's good with healing magic and originally a class that all kinds of adventurers want to form a party with.
However, I think it only became a hindrance to anybody who partied with her.

“Hey, Ryua-chan. . . . . .”

Roel pleaded with teary eyes. I see, I understand the situation.

“It’s not that I’m shameless and taking advantage of you, but….umm…that….I wonder if it’s fine with you, would you like to form a party with me? Is it a no?”

Roel must have been right at her wits’ end, I think that must’ve been why she was kind to a stranger like me.
…That can’t be it though, she is not that kind of girl. I don’t really know why, but I’m sure of that fact.

“I don’t mind, since I probably don’t know anything at all.”

“Thank you!”

A smile appeared on her face, both of my hands were grasped and were swung up and down.
I became happy that I was thanked.
Though, it should actually be me who should be showing gratitude.
Today, if Roel didn’t show up at that time I wonder how things would have turned out.

【Ryua | Lv: Unknown | Class: Sword Fighter | Rank: D】
【Roel | Lv: 2 | Class: Healer | Rank: D】

And thus a new party was formed.
Just now, my stomach growled.

“Ahaha, my stomach is also empty. I wonder what I should make.”

Roel walked quickly to the kitchen.
I want to ask, I want to know about a lot of things.
10 years, it’s because I lived not knowing anything about the outside world.
I wonder what’s happening at the village, and about that one-winged demon.
I’ll try talking to Roel about it while eating.

“Here~, sorry I wasn’t able to make that much.”

There was a very nice smell.
I’ve only been eating monster meat. That being the case, a feast I haven’t seen before was placed on the table.
There’s egg with rice inside. I wonder what kind of food this is?

“It’s omurice, do you not like it?”

“It’s delicious!”

When I opened my mouth, the chance to ask slipped away. My whole body was enveloped

in a pleasurable feeling.
The soft-boiled egg intertwined with enough rice, the ketchup's sourness was skillfully neutralized leaving it with a tender flavor.
I unintentionally cried again. I never thought I would eat a mother's cooking again, it was just as delicious. I almost forgot about this sensation.

"What should I do after this?"

"You wanted to know about your village?"

"Yeah but I can't enter it, right?"

"You have to at least be A rank, only a few exceptional people can go into the village."

"How can I become an A rank?"

"As adventurers, if we can easily handle quests naturally I think our value will rise. However to become an A rank adventurer, we have to do something HUGE. It may be very difficult."

"HUGE", Roel spread out both of her arms when she said that.

"There are only 100 A rank adventurers in the world. For example, they can exterminate a dragon that can destroy an entire army. Or they discover unknown dungeons. Moreover, I'm sure there will be an examination."

"Then, all I need to do is defeat a strong monster."

"Did you even understand a little bit of what I said……."

Roel put her finger on her forehead and sighed.
She was completely surprised. But in short, 'If you work hard your rank will rise' is what I understood.
Now since that's decided, starting right at the crack of dawn tomorrow, let's kill a strong dragon.
I was able to fight a dragon at the 60th floor.
It was such a dreadful guy, it was able to stop my movement with just its roar.

"Thanks for the food, it was delicious."

"Thank you, go take a bath first while I take care of the dishes."

"A bath….."

It was such a refreshing thing to hear.
When I was still in the cave there was a spring on the way which I used to wash my body.
Though I wasn't able perfectly clean myself, since while I was bathing there was a monster that came and attacked me.

"Don't worry I can properly wash myself."

“Eh?”

Roel looked at me with a blank expression.
That day there was only one bed and it wasn’t made for 2. I fell asleep quickly to prepare myself for tomorrow.

Chapter 5 – First Mission

When the 30 meter long <Poison Salamander> swung its long neck, the adventurers fighting it on the front row easily got blown away.

“Hey, hold on!”

“It’s useless, I already can’t breathe…….”

The corpse of the swordfighter twisted in an unnatural way and was covered in blood.
Seeing this, the priest guy was discouraged.
The <Poison Salamander> was merciless. Behind the priest there was an archer which was targeted by the beast.

“You think I’d allow that!? Double Shot!”

【Keitz|Lv: 13|Class: Archer|Rank: C】

【Keitz fired Double Shot!】

A pair of arrows were fired and consecutively hit the head of the lizard.
However, it looked like the arrows were stuck. The monster shook its head and then at that moment the arrows harmlessly fell to the ground.

【Poison Salamander received 11 damage!】
【Poison Salamander|HP:1509/1520】

The Poison Salamander glared at Keitz and Gilori.

“Tsk! What’s with this monster!?”

“Retreat! It’s literally taking no damage! If this goes on we will be annihilated!”

Keitz and Gilori ran away from the <Strange Plains> to survive.

///////

It was in a noisy morning. Roel and I moved quickly to the guild.
Inside the guild, it was filled with the people I saw yesterday.

“It’s an emergency mission! Apparently living at the <Bear Forest> it lost its way and ended up at the <Strange Plains>! Subjugation members should at least be B rank! First-aid

members are below C rank, but don't worry!"

The Glasses wearing guild person from yesterday was loudly announcing the details.
A major uproar was happening inside the guild.
Normally, the ferocious monsters of <Bear Forest> don't come out.
It seems for some reason that one appeared at the <Strange Plains> which has a danger level of 6.

"Roel, let's join them!"

"B-but it's subjugation! It's useless. After all we are D rank"

"Anything is OK so let's take it!"

I pulled the arm of the indecisive Roel, trying to volunteer as a First-aid member.
According to the explanation, the first-aid members are to give medicine to the injured adventurers at the <Strange Plains>.
Our role is to take care of them.
However, we were warned about fighting against the <Poison Salamander>.
The reward is 2000G. Ok, let's do it!

"Roel, these short pants you gave me are very easy to move in."

"There a was the time when I wanted to become a fighter but I didn't. I'm glad that they didn't go to waste."

As for my upper half, I'm wearing a tank top and a thin jacket over it.
Thanks to the tattered and dusty appearance, it made me look like the adventurers that I got used to seeing.
Since I also received some underwear from Roel, I wonder if I look weird.
No, the underwear won't affect that.
I wonder if it's because our age is the same, but it perfectly fit me.
Although I say our age is the same, I don't know what my true age is since I can't remember much from before 10 years ago.

"Well then, it looks like you're all gathered up."

An old guy who was the leader clapped his hand to quiet the group.
It was the person that Speardude troubled the other day.
That man who was bothered by Speardude and who he went out with yesterday.

"I'm sorry if I sound insolent but on this occasion I, Gantetsu, have accepted the role of leader! You guys that I don't know nice to meet you!"

【Gantetsu|Lv: 31|Class: Warrior|Rank: A】

"Gantetsu-san, it's reassuring that there is an A ranking adventurer, however I think at your level you could do it alone. With this number of people are we even necessary?"

Keitz, the archer, asked that question while looking at the ten adventurers here.
“The B-rank priest Etolam and I will fight. After I receive Etolam’s support I will attack!”
(TL: 後は救護に当たってもらう*)*
“I’ll be the rear-guard doing the supporting, I think that will increase the chance of winning. It’s not that we are doubting your strength, but I just feel concerned about our flank.”

【Etolam|Lv:22|Class: Priest|Rank: B】

The relief team that Roel and I are in contains 8 people.
It was explained that no matter how many people you rescued in a hurry it won’t change the reward money.
I wonder if it means that all I have to do is live and return to receive the 2000G.
Gantetsu will distract the <Poison Salamander>, at that moment we will rescue the injured. It’s as simple as that.
<Poison Salamander>, I wonder how strong it is.
I’m interested, but why is it that I must not fight it?

We went outside of the town towards the <Strange Plains>.
At the gate to the plains there was a small cabin. A person who seemed like they were management was going in and out, checking the place.
From the cabin a tall weir was spread out, making it something hard to get across to.
(ED: a weir is pretty much a human made dam, pooling and altering water flow)
We set foot on the plains as Gantetsu lead us.

“It sure is wide…”

Roel seems to be curious about it. The green landscape stretched out as far as the eye could see. There were slightly elevated grounds here and there, and sometimes it stretched out to make a narrow path.
I asked about the plains and the hills. As far I’m concerned, that narrow paths and the hills can be used to our advantage.
*(TL:*平原と聞いて平らな草原をイメージしていたボクにとってはその細道こそが曲者だと思った。*)*
If you are cornered by a monster somewhere with a tall wall such as a cliff or a hill, it will become a blind spot where no one will notice that you are in a pinch.
I thought that if the <Poison Salamander> were to attack there, you won’t be saved.
But from this place you won’t be noticed by the <Poison Salamander>.
So that means, it’s possible to hide in this type of blind spot.

“I’ll be going first, so we should put some distance between us until we arrive. As soon as the <Poison Salamander> appears, I will bait it.”

Gantetsu-san separated from us, and then he began walking normally again.
(TL: ガンテツはノシノシと大またで歩き出す。*)*
We walked about 10 meters behind Gantetsu-san.

“Roel, I noticed that earlier you were curiously looking around, is this your first time coming here?”

“Yeah, because I think it would be dangerous for a level 2 like me to be in a place with a danger level of 6.”

“Keh, why do I have to come along with these people to pick up some garbage.”

It was Speardude from yesterday who fought with Gantetsu-san that was talking like that.

“Yesterday I was drunk because of the alcohol, today this Aude will show his power”

【Aude|Lv: 3|Class: Lancer|Rank: D】

“The weak point of the <Poison Salamander> is ice. . . .ice. . . . .ice. . . .*mumbling*”

【Tolppo|Lv: 13|Class: Magician|Rank: C】

This guy seems somehow scary. Because of that we should put some distance between us as we walk.
We ended up walking a long while. It was really tedious doing the same thing for so long.

“Hey! Gantetsu-san, it’s the signal! It seems that the <Poison Salamander> has been discovered! Fall back!”

Keitz encouraged everyone in a low voice.
All the members simultaneously fell back, and then started to search for injured people.
We quickly found a person in the shadow of a boulder, he was crudely breathing and blood was pouring out.
Roel quickly used recovery magic on him.

“Thank you…..”

“This is only first-aid, you know. Ryua-chan, what should I do?”

“I only have to bring this person to the town right? Just wait a minute. I’ll go.”

“E-eh?”

Leaving Roel wearing a confused look, I carried the man while running and jumped over the the hill.
It took me 3 minutes to return to Roel who was dumbfounded.

“Ryua-chan. . . .”

“That person has been safely delivered to town. Now, let’s go find the rest.”

Disregarding Roel who was unable to understand what happened, we found injured people in rapid succession.
Among them there was a person who had already become a corpse.
It’s skull was pulverized and the brain was poking out.
The armor that was worn wasn’t able to accomplish its purpose, the whole body was

splendidly broken.

"Ugh…urp"

Roel covered her mouth with her hands.

"A-are you alright?"

I lightly rubbed Roel's back.
Roel looked like she was about to cry. I decided I should nod my head and try talking.

"Now that I think about it I'm not seeing any monsters around here."

To calm Roel down I changed the subject.

"Probably, I think the <Poison Salamander> got scared and completely ran away"

I thought it couldn't be that easy.
But monsters from the underground 30th floor were escaping one by one and running this way. At that moment, an enormous 4-headed dog came out from inside.
To anyone looking on, they would think I couldn't win and run away.
Its because of this odd monster that the ecosystem of this place went mad. I want to exterminate it by all means.

Before I realized it, Aude was behind me.

Chapter 6 – Courage and Recklessness

"Aude . . . . .-san? Did you find anyone injured?"

I asked a couple of questions to Aude and he denied it with a shake of his hand.
"Hey, I saw you, you know. You're amazing. What's with your body strength?"

"L-leaving that aside we need to really need to help them!"

We tried to leave, but Aude stood on our way.

"Aren't you gonna pass over me? You can even defeat that <Poison Salamander> right?"
(TL: おまえとならあのポイズンサラマンダーをやれそうだ*)*
(ED: This is referencing that Aude saw Ryua move the injured from last chapter)

"Didn't they say that we must avoid fighting it?"

"What? As long as it's defeated it'll be alright. If you defeat it the guild will be sure to recognize you. Are you sure you want that old guy taking all the credit? That guy, compared to our rewards he will get more."

"You really shouldn't disrupt the order of the team you know……"

Roel refused with a small voice while looking down.

“Shut up, I’m not talking to you. I’m talking to that kid with short blue hair.”

“Roel formed a party with me you know. Don’t be stupid.”

“Aaaaa~, I understand. I don’t need your help anyways.”

Looking sour like a child, Aude suddenly changed direction and rapidly walked away.
If I’m not mistaken, that direction is where the <Poison Salamander> is.

“That guy…couldn’t be?”

“Yeah, isn’t that dangerous……?”

/////

“Mighty Force!”

【Etolam chanted Mighty Force! Gantetsu’s attack power raised!】

Gantetsu jumped high up into the sky, and aiming at the <Poison Salamander> he brought his axe down.

【Gantetsu used [大切斬]Taisetuki!】

Entrusting his body to gravity, Gantetsu’s strike pushed the head of the <Poison Salamander> to the ground.
The <Poison Salamander> raised a cry while its head was gushing green blood.

【Poison Salamander received 462 damage!】
【Poison Salamander HP 622/1520】

“It sure is tough……but that hit should have given it a good rattling.”

The <Poison Salamander> raised its head that was gushing blood, and seized Gantetsu. following that moment, it released a shower of violet liquid from its mouth.

【Poison Salamander used Poison Splash!】

At that instant, Gantetsu tried to dodge to the right, but half of his body was completely bathed in it.

【Gantetsu was poisoned!】
【Poison Damage! Gantetsu received 80 damage! Gantetsu HP 214/440】

“Uhhg! So it has come to this, but I’ll rely on you Etolam-san!”

“Angel Cure!”

【Etolam chanted Angel Cure! Gantetsu's poison vanished】

The damage Gantetsu received from the <Poison Salamander> seems to be taking a toll on him.
His feet began to stagger, and he wasn't able to skillfully avoid the <Poison Salamander>'s pursuit.

"Now, it's time to put the pressure on!"
(TL:「さぁて、一気にたたみかけるぜ！」*)*

"So that's the <Poison Salamander>! It sure is big…"

Behind Etolam, Aude was fiddling with his spear.

"W-why are you here! Didn't you listen to the strategy?!"

Etolam was surprised, and while distracted Aude started running towards the <Poison Salamander>.

"Hey, old man! I know what I'm doing! I will show you my true strength!!

"You fool!"

Gantetsu's roar was useless, Aude was already above the <Poison Salamander>'s legs.

"Ha?"

Aude freely fell from the sky striking the <Poison Salamander>'s legs, at least, he should have.
Gantetsu jumped toward Aude and hit his body, causing Aude to fly away. Without a moment of hesitation Gantetsu raised his axe in the air.

Gantetsu might be able to take the hit, he wasn't doing this for pride.
(TL: 慢心してなかった。*)*

However, if things continue he will get crushed. I chose this moment to land the final strike.

"So this is where I die……"

A shockwave hit the <Poison Salamander>.
(TL: えぐり込むような衝撃がポイズンサラマンダーを襲った。*)*

From the forelimb to the tail, in a straight line the <Poison Salamander> was cut.
Understanding that the large body might fall onto them, Aude and Gantetsu evaded it.

【The Attack of Ryua damaged the Poison Salamander by 302701!】
【The Poison Salamander HP 0/1520】
【The Poison Salamander was defeated!】

Still in the pose of holding his axe overhead, Gantetsu noticed the girl way in the back.
I also was also standing still in a pose of holding my sword overhead.

Good thing that <Sonic Ripper> was barely in time.
Nevertheless, the added effect from my sword, I wonder why it didn't activate this time?
Because I attacked in the heat of the moment I didn't really think about it; but if it was activated then those 2 would have been hit as well…
I shouldn't be thinking about those kinds of things.

"Haa, haa, Ryu-Ryua-chan wait for me…"

Roel caught up with me while panting for air.
When I was wearing a robe I hated walking, so her fatigue is easily understandable.

"A-amazing! Gantetsu-san if you had that technique you should've used it right a the start! We could have finish much faster!"

Etolam rushed over to Gantetsu.
I wonder if Aude doesn't have any energy, he's just sitting on the ground looking stunned.

Thank God, It's good that the extermination was safely done."

Roel also thought that Gantetsu defeated the <Poison Salamander>.
Even though it was my achievement.

"……..the mission is done. Let's return."

Etolam was in high spirits as he went, I quickly followed suit.
Suddenly I got the feeling someone was staring at me, I immediately turned around.
I saw Gantetsu and Aude, they were talking behind me.

"O-old man. . . .I-I am…"

"Certainly my life was on the line as well."

He laughed like making fun of himself, then Gantetsu walked off.
Etolam went back to chase after Gantetsu.

"Oi, you're Ryua right? Cut off the whiskers of the <Poison Salamander> and bring it. That's the proof that it was defeated and it just so happens to also sell for a high price. But be careful when cutting, it's the source of the poison after all."

"Eh, ah, aa, yeah…"

It was a sudden instruction, but I followed it and cut the whiskers of the <Poison Salamander>.
I was nervous about the activation of the added effect of my sword, but nothing happened.
In that case I wonder what the condition was for it to activate.

“Gantetsu-san, why is that kid doing that? Since you were the one that defeated it, you should be the one carrying it.”

“I’m tired.”

“Haa…”

Etolam wasn’t fully satisfied with the reply.

“Ryua-chan, lets go back.”

Roel pulled my arm.
Roel, Etolam, Aude and everyone else thinks that Gantetsu defeated it.
I wonder if the old guy will boast about it when he returns.

Chapter 7 – As Adventurers

We went back to the town’s Guild to settle our completed quest.
Because Roel and I are in a party, the 2000G reward was divided between us.
That Aude, he isn’t content on receiving just the 2000G reward.
Even though he was only following us.
*(TL:*あいつ、ボク達の後ろをついてきただけなのに。*)*
Gantetsu and Etolam received 3500G as the reward for the Subjugation.
Since the 2 of them were in a party as well, they also split their 3500G reward.

Gantetsu looked towards the faces of all members.

“Gantetsu-san brought down the <Poison Salamander>, I’m glad I saw it. As expected of a person at A rank”
Saying that, Keitz compared his own bow to Gantetsu’s Axe. However, Gantetsu didn’t react to the words of praise.

“Yeah, I probably wasn’t any use back there.”

“That isn’t true, Etolam-san.”

“The truth is I was the one that defeated it.”

shin
The peaceful mood turned into silence.
And then everyone looked at me.
Gantetsu had been staring at me before I even opened my mouth.

“If I hadn’t fired my <Sonic Ripper>, you would’ve been done in. Yet you’re hiding it?”

“Ryu-Ryua-chan . . . . . .”

Roel was nervously pulling me back.

Gantetsu didn't say anything. He didn't even show an unpleasant face.
All he did was stare at me.

"Are you sure you aren't mistaken?"
(TL:「それじゃ、オレから一つ話がある。それは」*)*

"Don't ignore me!"

I yelled at Gantetsu.
*(TL:*ガンテツにツバがかかるほど怒鳴った。*)*
Nevertheless he was still staring at me.

"Why? It was supposed to be my achievement! You coward!"

"Let's stop it, Ryua-chan……."

I brushed aside Roel who was trying to pull me hard, then I grabbed Gantetsu.
Taken back, the Adventurers quickly started to criticize me.

"You, what the heck are you saying? Stop saying irresponsible things."
Etolam tried to restrain me with his angry, heavy voice.

"Answer me! Dammit! Dammit! Dammit!"

My vexation started to rise while Gantetsu continued staring at me.
Stopping the silence Gantetsu opened his mouth.

"Sorry, I'll hear you out later. Can we not speak about this matter right now? If you raise a commotion here, your Adventurer Registry will be deleted and your reward will be reduced to 0"

"You!"

"No…please stop…..Ryua-chan"

When I tried to grab Gantetsu, Roel stopped me with me her feeble strength.
Tears started to flow from her face while talking to me.

"Let's stop……I, because I believe you…..Ryua-chan attacking….."

Then I looked around the area.
Angry, amazed, ridiculing, various glares were pouring onto me.
I turned around and stepped back, dejected.

"Aren't I an idiot?"

I was told that it was a Boss around here.
I don't even have any more energy to talk back.
All I did was stay silent, I didn't even understand what Gantetsu was saying.

Gantetsu coughed to clear his throat and continued to talk.

“Anyways, moving on, about the <Poison Salamander>. That guy is a very tenacious monster. That creature will never forget a grudge it received.
He must have fought with an adventurer that escaped, and chased him all the way here to town. So, basically what I’m trying to say is that somebody entered the <Bear Forest> without informing anyone and provoked that guy.”

“Well that means……in the <Bear Forest> there are scary monsters besides the Hellbear. Rather, I heard that the <Poison Salamander> is more troublesome.
Its strength is not as strong as a Hellbear’s, but I’m afraid they weren’t able to kill the tenacious <Poison Salamander> at that time.”

Etolam supported his chin with his thumb and index finger while nodding, and muttered “Uh-huh”.

“That’s all. I don’t want to start pointing fingers.”

Gantetsu was implying that someone provoked the <Poison Salamander> and pointed that out for the other adventurers to understand.

“Wa-wasn’t it you!?”

“I wouldn’t go to the <Bear Forest>……that place is for A ranked members, and by no means would I try to fight it.”

The Adventurers in the room caused a commotion. And as far as I’m concerned, I don’t care what they do.
Earlier, I can’t say I was calm but even so, I still wasn’t okay with talking later.
After the group dispersed, Gantetsu called us out.
We went to talk at a bar near the guild.
Nighttime at a bar, it was already filled with adventurers who just finished their jobs.
There were already people drinking alcohol and drunk people singing.
We sip the melon soda with a straw that Gantetsu treated us to.
I wonder how long it’s been since I was able to experience a powerful stimulus of a carbonated drink, I was totally choked by the bubbles.

“Yo, about earlier, it was my bad. but first of all thank you for saving me. Please accept this.”

He handed over 1750G.it looked like it was the reward from earlier, part of the 3500G.
Though now that T think of it, he had shared half of it with Etolam.

“Umm, I can’t accept this…”

Roel was indifferent about it and shoved the gold on top of the table back to Gantetsu.
However, Gantetsu blocked it with his arm.

“Well, my life was saved. Something like that, at least to me, isn’t nothing. Please, I beg of you to take it.”

Placing his hands on the table, Gantetsu lowered his head.
I thought it was no longer productive to try and fight it, so Roel took the money.

“There are 2 reasons why I wasn’t able to fess up in front of everyone:
First of all they would have checked your rank. You wouldn’t have been recognized as the quest clearer and no reward would have been given.
And second, no matter how many you guys kill, the quest details are absolute.
There are ways to resolve these kinds of things, like what I did, but other methods are more troublesome.”

After have a drink of cold water, Gantetsu continued.

“There is a meaning why adventurers are divided into ranks.”

“What do you mean?”

There are still a lot of things that I want to ask.

“I’m not good at explaining. Let me say it like this:
There is a job for low ranks in itself.
Some adventurers will take a higher ranked quest than they should.
Afterwards, the client will panic when seeing the adventurer is a lower rank than expected.
There are people that can be saved depending on the reliability of the adventurer.
It may be searching for a pet, or guarding, or escorting, but it’s necessary to understand worries like that.”

We just stayed quiet, listening to Gantetsu talk.
We tuned out the commotion from the drunk guys.

“About that, the upper ranks do things that you don’t get to see. As in, you won’t know if they reported the right thing.
Towards those people who are thickheaded I have nothing but disdain.
For example even if they ranked up to a higher rank, those type of guys will do something completely irresponsible in their jobs.
It only gets as good as that, I’m afraid. I wonder if just taking a part of the reward is good enough compensation.”
(TL: このくらいでいいだろう、報酬分だけやればいいかなんてな*)*

“Fuuu~”, Gantetsu took a breath and downed another glass of water.

“After all, there are some serious cases that leads to accidents.
Even you should’ve seen that from Aude, what an example.
I don’t think he learned his lesson, to be honest. It may not end well for him the next time.
That’s why I brought Aude to this bar earlier, to thoroughly speak to him.
Even though he was picking his nose, he was probably listening…”

“Is that so. . . . ”

Gantetsu’s word deeply resounded in my chest.
We need to raise up our rank, but the fact about the client didn’t completely get through to me.

“There may be those of the lower status and the so called ‘unrefined’ that you have heard of, but I want you guys to learn about this.
For example, you defeated a <Poison Salamander> in one hit. A rank, D rank, does it matter? Each and every person that gives their all is great.”

“Gantetsu-san, I’m sorry. . . . ”

I apologized from the bottom of my heart.

“Well, I didn’t plan to do a lecture but you guys just listened to me speak.”

“Gahahaha”
Gantetsu was laughing.

I’ll do what I can do. I’m still at D rank.
For a novice beginner, what can I do? Let’s think about that.

“And, let’s end this talk here. I’m sure you guys haven’t had dinner right? Today will be my treat so go and order lots!”

Considering the mood we had earlier, it’s totally the opposite now. Gantetsu excitedly ordered a beer.

“You already gave us the reward money…and to go as far as treat us…this is obviously too much!”

Roel panicked as she refused to receive the treat but it was already too late.
Gantetsu’s head was already filled with alcohol.
Proof of this was that he was firmly looking at the menu.
With writings and pictures of beer.
And just now, he even ordered another beer.

“Of course, since you guys are underage, no beers ok?”

Suddenly Gantetsu took his beer and chugged it in seconds.
Roel and I also received the food that we ordered.

“If you feel like it, come to the Avangard Kingdom <Castle Town> whenever you like. I’ll always welcome you.”

Gantetsu’s face was already red with alcohol. Not wanting to lose, I drank the melon soda directly.

For 10 years, I haven't drank any carbonated drinks. It popped and fizzed inside my throat as if scolding me for being conceited and drinking too fast.

Chapter 8 – My First Dungeon Delving

"Certainly this is the requested item that the client is seeking for. As I thought he died.. . . . . ."

"Yes. . . . . ."

The quest Roel and I took today was enough to make us feel dejected.
We were to search for a comrade of an Adventurer that failed escape here in this town but at the end what we found was a corpse that was cruelly eaten and scattered around.
It looked like a marriage ring, and hearing the cries from the person's family made my chest tighten.
I understand how they feel, seeing their reaction to this.
We can't give up being adventurers.
*(TL:*仲間の人達は薄々とわかっていたようで、あえてボク達に依頼したようだ。
諦めきれなかったのかもしれない。*)*

"We received 300G as a reward, Ryua-chan. . . . ."

"Wasn't it supposed to be 200G?"

Along the way in our quest Roel leveled up by 1 but she wasn't happy.
Once we completed our quest, we checked our levels at the iron box. But like before my level didn't show itself.

Yesterday, I had tried asking Gantetsu about the one-winged demon when we were parting.

"I have been doing this job for years but I haven't heard anything about it. Regarding the attack on Ikana Village, the truth is we don't completely understand what happened. Probably since it sort of happened in the blink of an eye."

Scrtchscrtch
While scratching his beard, Gantetsu continued.

"I don't understand the nature of that one-winged guy. Is there some sort of reason why he has only one wing? I think knowing that would be relatively important."

I didn't consider that, it sounds helpful.
(TL: そんなのどうだっていいと思いかけたけど、確かにそうだ。*)*
Let's remember it.

While I was being absent minded and recalling things, Roel was tugging my arm to get my attention.

“Something like this, this quest is perfect for us.”

[I want you to gather some of the gushing water in <Avangard Cave> 2nd floor. There is no particular amount needed, but the more you bring more rewards will be added.]
[Client: Shopkeeper of Zenbei Bar, Pablo]

Roel read it out loud, I agreed while looking at the paper she was pointing to.

“The <Avangard Cave> is not that far from here. Danger level 3, exactly the same level as me.”

“OK, that means that we won’t be hesitating over taking the quest, right?”

We immediately went to take the quest.
It’s fortunate for us that it hasn’t been taken yet.
Afterwards we went to the shop where Pablo was to hear the quest details.
It was Bar Zenbei, it was the place where Gantetsu treated us yesterday.

“Oh, you guys took that quest right?”

A plump man with a round face welcomed us.
It seems to be Pablo.

“Just so you are aware, this quest is known and performed by many adventurers on a regular basis. The water there is nutritional, so it’s most suitable for cooking and making cocktails. We sell merchandise that uses it and we need a lot. For example . . . . .”

“Um, setting that aside, how much will be a good amount to bring here?”

The conversation was getting long so Roel stopped it.

“Oops! Sorry, sorry, I want you to use that push cart for transport.”

Clatter
There was a moderate sized push cart and empty container set beside it.

“Before you two, there was a really strong guy and he was able to carry more. But for you, this is a good amount.”

“I want more.”

“Hmmm?”

A round face and a round eyes, Pablo made an interested face.
Thus I put 10 containers in a sack. I had to carry all of this towards the dungeon.
I looked like a burglar carrying a big sack on his back which is not very cool.
The fountain we’re looking for that gushes out water is underground on the 2nd floor. Beginner adventurers should not go any farther, but the dungeon goes deeper. You just needed to follow the road.

However, after that the danger level is higher and there are monsters lurking within. That's why you absolutely must not proceed any further. Pablo was really determined to get that idea ingrained within us.

Before long we arrived at the cave.
Roel was tightly holding on her staff while having a tense expression.

"Th-then should we g-go?"

"You don't need to be that tense . . . . . ."

Roel was slowly and timidly entering the cave while looking around the area for affirmation. From behind I place my hand on her shoulder, "Hiiii!" she jumped and her staff rolled on the ground.

"S-stop that~! You!"

She actually got very mad.
I understand why, since so far it was the fault of this tension that I haven't been able to feel. There are monsters you'll encounter and you can easily get into a panic when it happens.
It seems that the monsters here are not that strong. I will use all my strength to support her so that her confidence can grow. That can be considered a way for me to repay her.

The interior of the cave was pretty wide. Though the entrance was quite small, from there it was connected to a hall in which there were many cylindrical holes on way as you progressed.
There were rocks on the wall haphazardly piled over one another. I was really worried that the rocks might collapse on top of us from moving around in this cave.
If a monster shows up I have to avoid doing anything flashy and be careful.

"I wonder which way would be good to go?"

Roel asked that question nervously, she was still tightly holding her staff with both of her hands and looking around restlessly.

"When a monster comes out I will somehow deal with it."

While saying that I took her hand.
I wonder if that lessened her tension. Roel was finally holding her staff with one hand.

"Sorry, Ryua-chan, I seem to be a burden to you."

"You're not, I won't call you something like that!"

I smiled.
Although if I enter a battle, I've been fighting alone up till now so I'm worried I won't be able to support her properly.
Recovery magic is the specialty of a Healer, which is helpful. I can use some magic, but I

can't use recovery magic at all. Thanks to that, during my time in the <Caves of Hell>, somewhere around 50th floor I ended up returning to the resting point quite often.

Right at that moment, from inside the cave 2 small rabbits jumped out.
At first glance it looked cute, but it had an unsuitable sharp fangs and claws.
With one glance, no matter how you look at it, it doesn't look friendly.
In the blink of an eye, it shortened the distance from us with its natural walking ability.

【Cave Rabbits appeared】

"Hiiiiiiii!! Let's calm down Ryua-chan! No need to panic!"

Just as I thought, Roel panicked. I can hear her staff clanging as it fell onto the ground.
I fought these guys when I just entered the <Caves of Hell>.
I experienced a lot of pain from these guys. That's why I found it profoundly memorable.
At the start it was hard to fight them, but once you get accustomed to it these guys are nothing as an opponent.
This place was said to be for beginner adventurers, it seems like the truth.

One of the Cave Rabbits leaped to shorten the distance.

【Cave Rabbit A attacked!】

I briefly thought about putting down these containers to attack but reconsidered.
For Roel's sake lets receive one attack. Then i will receive a heal from her.
I purposely let the Cave Rabbit bite me.

However:
【Ryua received no damage!】

Its fangs were stuck on my arm, but still the rabbit continued to try and bite me while flopping around.
I understood that it was frantically trying to eat me, but it was really a fruitless effort.
And at my back there was Roel.

"H-He-HEAL~!"

For some reason she was casting Heal.
Not understanding what she's doing, once again I held her hand to calm her down.
<Cave Rabbit A> was still biting my left hand. As one would expect it started to hurt a little.

"Calm down, look it's fine since I'm right here."

I showed a smile.
The rabbit still wasn't stopping.
I saw Roel brandish her staff and swing it.
Rather than the rabbit it hit me.
She attacked my back with all her might.

【Roel was Confused! Ryua received 2 Damage!】

“That hurt! But I’ll be fine if you use your recovery magic on me.”

It totally hurt more than the monster’s attack.
Meanwhile, the other rabbit attacked aiming at Roel this time.
This would be dangerous, so I assaulted the rabbit with a light kick.

【Cave Rabbit B received 1284 damage!】
【Cave Rabbit B was defeated!】
【Cave Rabbit HP 0/17】

I was just planning to brush it off lightly, but only the scattered meat was left.
It was not my plan to do that.
Then I saw Roel who already fainted.

I don’t really know what to do with the rabbit on my hand, so I threw it away.

【Cave Rabbit A was defeated!】
【Cave Rabbit HP 0/17】

“Roel, The monster are already defeated you know.”

“A-a-ah?”

I supported Roel who was dizzily walking.

“Ryua-chan. . . . .as I thought, I . . . . .may be no good.”

She started to cry while I was supporting her back, looking at her.
For a little while I thought about the outcome, I decided to let Roel have peace of mind.

“From what you’ve seen I think you already know, but it’s fine for you to not worry. I won’t let something like a monster attack Roel who is behind me.”

“Bu-but”

“You believed in me when I said the I was the one who defeated the Poison Salamander, right? The monsters here are far weaker, for now you need to calm down and practice, okay?”

I’ve been fighting alone so I don’t know what I should teach her, but I thought that there wouldn’t be any meaning if I just defeat the monsters alone.
When I started to feel a little insecure, I noticed Roel’s existence behind me.

“Let’s go, the fountain is on the 2nd floor, right?”

I stretched out my hand and Roel took it, then we started to walk.
I had dropped the containers earlier, so I made sure I had them all before continuing on.

“Thank you, Ryua-chan……”

Silently saying her thanks she started walking with a happy expression.
We haven’t known each other for long, but I want to be with her all the time.
(TL: 会って間もないけど、ずっとこの子といたい。*)*
For some reason I was thinking like that.

Chapter 9 – One Dungeon After the Another, and Then…

We ended up hitting a lot of dead ends on our way, so we ended up getting our hands on lots of items from inside the treasure boxes.
But most of it was recovery medicine.

“Isn’t it mysterious? I wonder who left those behind…”

It seems to be one of the 7 wonders of the Adventurers.
Inside a dungeon there are treasure boxes. Some adventurers get nothing from it, some adventurers find weapons, and another adventurer finding the same treasure box in the same place gets something random.
I wonder who established this system and when they placed these boxes.
I wonder why the contents are different for each adventurer…
Thing is, it’s only a profit for adventurers to get items like this, so some are pursuing the mystery.

【Ghost Bat appeared! HP 13】
【Killer Mole appeared! HP 21】

On our way we were attacked by monsters here and there.
I wonder if my encouragement from earlier was effective, it seems like Roel was properly able to heal me.
I haven’t really received any major injuries but I won’t say something cruel like ‘the healing is not needed’.
I’m not sorry for slaughtering the monsters, but it’s bothersome to draw my sword out every time. That’s why I’ve been using my bare hands to finish them.

“I-Is that it?”

The narrow path opened into a large circular area, and in the middle of it clean water was gushing out.
We were following the path to the left and went past here before, somehow we didn’t notice it.

“Isn’t this such clean and pure water?”

Roel drank the water with her hand.

“It’s so refreshing and it tastes good! I wonder why it’s cold~?”

“Let me see…….”

I tried drinking it, the cold water was really pleasant and delicious.
Let’s immediately start drawing the water.
Right then,
I heard a hissing cry of a monster to our left.
I see 2 lights glaring from the darkness, then after a moment it started to crawl on the ground, with a long body that can freely bend and slither it came towards us.

【A Large Ravenous Cobra appeared! HP212】

“Wa-wah! Ryua-chan, what should we do?!”

Roel who was in a daze drinking the water quickly spat it out and shakily wielded her staff.
I understood that this monster was different from the monsters we had encountered here up till now.
I don’t really know how strong beginner adventurers are, but most likely they would have a hard time against this.
The <Cobra> seemed to want to intimidate us. It started to stretch upwards, showing its large body.
It was taller than me.

“Roel don’t move from there.”

The <Cobra> was moving smoothly along the ground. It decided to aim at my neck and bite it.
Not happening. Let’s counter attack it by seizing it.
However, the <Cobra>’s true aim was the one behind me, Roel.
While I was thinking, it was wiggling its body back and forth. Suddenly it dashed straight towards Roel.
I wonder if it instinctively understood that it couldn’t win against me. It successfully used feint on me.
But, I won’t allow this.
Because I promised Roel that I would protect her.

【Ryua attacked!】

I cut the the <Cobra> from behind.
Its neck sprung up, and then its large body twisted as it fell on the ground.

【Large Ravenous Cobra HP 0/212】
【Large Ravenous Cobra received 312297 damage!】
【Large Ravenous Cobra was defeated!】

“…….ei!”

She was shaken because of what happened, but Roel quickly gained her composure.
For some reason she mistakenly hit the <Cobra>’s head that happened to roll to her feet.

“Thank you, Ryua-chan.”

“That surprised me a bit, I didn’t think it was that smart.”

“That monster, It may have been this floor’s boss. Being a boss monster, it’s terribly strong and has high intelligence. Furthermore, for some reason when it’s defeated it will reappear in the dungeon after a while. This is also one of the Adventurer’s 7 Wonders.”

Then it’s possible that this monster was defeated before.
Perhaps it was learning…? No way, that’s impossible.
Nevertheless, I wonder if this <Cobra> possesses poison.
If that’s the case, the spring water might be hazardous.

“Let me see, I wonder which part of this monster will sell for a high price…”

Just like the <Poison Salamander>, one part of the monster can be sold for a high price.
Last time, I didn’t know the true price of the whiskers because the Guild raised its price.
But now I wonder how much this would sell for?

“For now lets take its fangs and scales.”

Roel seemed familiar with doing things like this.
While I was admiring her, she started talking to me.
(TL: 感心しているとロエルがボクの疑問を汲み取った。*)*

“You know, I, because I’m not that usually helpful in the party I can only be so when I do this. That’s why I’m good at this, ehehe……..even though I’m a healer.”

While looking embarrassed, Roel continued working.
I took a glimpse at her after she was done, she was wearing a gloomy expression on her face.

“Sorry, I was a burden……..that’s why next time I will do my best.”

“It’s because Roel is still level 3, don’t worry about such things.”

When starting something, no one can do it well.
Even I, at the <Caves of Hell>, wasn’t able to win against the rabbits we fought earlier.
At that time my body was ragged and the blood wouldn’t stop leaking…….hmmm, I can’t remember what I did after that.

“I will certainly do my best to get strong to give Ryua-chan peace of mind.”

She rubbed her face, and then her left hand was raised high and struck a guts pose.
I’m really curious, what’s my level?
I wonder if the machine is fixed yet. Let’s try it out when we get back.

///

When the 2 adventurers left, a shadow came out from a hole somewhere to the left of the cave.

“Oi oi, there’s no way right? What’s with that?”

While taking the cap that was covered in dirt, that ‘shadow’ was praising Ryua.
On its left hand was the <Cobra>. It turned into light and it was sucked in its arm.

“It should be impossible to react to that feint……they may be a hindrance to us. Should I kill them right now before its too late?”

The shadow stayed there as pondered for a short while, but it reconsidered its choices. The shadow slowly melted in to the background and then vanished without a trace.

Monster Book Entries

【Hell Bear】
The reigning tyrant of the Bear Forest with a danger level of 30.
Many confident veteran adventurers whose first encounter with it got their corpses torn apart.
It has a strong pelt, that's why it's a priceless material of a good robe.

【Poison Salamander】
An enormous Lizard with an overall length of 30 meters.
It lives in <Bear Forest>, once it's injured
where ever you go it will chase you tenaciously.
Its brutality is second only to the Hellbear.
Its size is to be feared more than its poison.

【Cave Rabbit】
It has a feral personality and is rather quick, but it can be easily defeated by a beginner adventurer.
Even so, be cautious when they appear in a group.
When a group of these eat you, you will suffer from being devoured slowly, piece by piece.
It may also die from shock.

Full Text Arc 2

All of Arc 2. Enjoy, guys.

Chapter 10 – The Night The Mystery Started

"OOh~ with this much I won't be worried for quite a while!"

I showed Pablo the containers filled to the brim with water. The staff was in a good mood as they carried the containers inside.

"Yeah~, but hey aren't you such a [powerful] girl? I can't really think of you being a D rank"

"T-thank you."

Pablo went around in circles to look at me, he looked at me from top to bottom, from every angle.
Feeling embarrassed, I moved away from him.

"You will be considerably compensated for this you know. By the way, have you girls eaten yet? If you're fine with it you can eat here. Of course it will be free."

I was attracted to the offer as my stomach started growling. Roel was quite hesitant, but just as I thought she couldn't win against hunger either. I ended up ordering the fried chicken for lunch and Roel got gyuudon.
Despite her appearance, Roel was quite the big eater.
Even though she was quite a reserved person, she ate not only the gyuudon but also a sandwich and some pasta.
Pablo was even startled by her appetite.
It seems that the food called gyuudon was from a distant island country.
Pablo boasted about the food in this shop, it has recipes from a wide variety of foreign countries.

"It was delicious, thanks for the food."

"I'm sorry……..just now I was unbelievably hungry."

Looking meek and without raising her face, Roel apologized about eating too much.
She actually left one of her dishes so clean there wasn't even a grain of rice or splash of sauce left.

"It's fine, it's fine. Promising adventurers should eat a lot to get some [power]!"

"Oh that's right, Pablo-san. We fought a cobra in that cave, what floor was that monster from? It was really dangerous."

"Cobra?"

Looking blankly, Pablo crossed his arm.

“For many years now, many adventurers have taken this quest. But I haven’t heard of any of them saying something like that.”

“Eh, then, it was first time this happened?….I wonder where that monster came from?”

“You girls, did you defeat it?”

“Yeah.”

“Ah, I was careless. If that kind of thing is there then from now on nobody less than C…..no, nobody less than B rank should take this quest. But then the expenses…”

While Pablo was grumbling, Pablo crossed his arm and walked around.

“But to do something like completely defeat it, you guys are amazing, yeah. I like you guys. And because of that.”

Cutting off the casual conversation, Pablo made a serious face.

“You might die you know. This old guy has seen many adventurers come here. Just yesterday I saw adventurers having fun drinking and I haven’t seen them since around here.”

Pablo had a bitter face while talking, but as we were leaving he saw us off with a smile. As we were leaving his bar, I noticed the sun was starting to set.
The reward we were given was 600g. We received it even though it was supposed to be 300g. After arriving at the guild, Roel went inside the iron box to measure her level. She did a little guts pose when she came out.

“My level increased to 5!”

“That’s amazing! But I wonder why you leveled up by 2 even though I was the one that defeated the monsters.”

Maybe its because she hit the cobra…no that can’t be it.

“You guys, aren’t you in a party? If that’s the case you’ll receive the experience together no matter who defeated the monster.”

Aude came out from the neighboring iron box. I remembered that I don’t get along well with this guy from the last time during the rescuing mission. No matter what this guy does, he will always stir up some trouble.
If it wasn’t for me and Gantetsu he would’ve died. I wonder if this guy has reflected on that.

“But in exchange, the experience you received as one person will be decreased. That’s why I do things solo.”

I suspected him of having ulterior motives. He seems to be the type to talk to anyone he

crossed paths with.

“Didn’t you say your level was 5? I also am doing my best, slowly but surely I finally reached level 6.”

“Ahaha, you’re higher than me.”

Roel laughed with insincerity. Neither of us will be taken in by this guy.

“Well then, just a little more. I’ll be C rank soon. You guys try your best.”

“See ya” he said as he went out of the room. I don’t like hearing it from him, but I got some good information. I guess we’re sort of even now.

/ / /

When we went back home I immediately started studying.

“Err.. this is [ろ(ro)]”

“So, [Ro] for Roel”

I started learning how to read and write a little bit. Roel being gentle while teaching helps a lot. But when I make a mistake…

“Wrong! This is [え(e)]”

She scolds me. It seems I am really bad at studying. Within 5 minutes I always become drowsy, but when that happens Roel will go “No!”.

“Roel, it may be impossible for me……”

“It’s going to be all right, because this kind of stuff is easier than defeating the Poison Salamander, right?”

I wonder if she was planning to encourage me… because it wasn’t working.
I have sleep resistance but I’m still tempted to sleep. That’s why this is much harder.

I just noticed that it was already late at night.
I should take a bath soon, but before I go to the bath I want to drink some juice.
If I remember correctly there was an iron box around here that you can put money in and juice comes out.
There was an iron box that measures your level at the guild, but if I remember correctly Roel explained to me that these things were made in a country called <Metalika>.
It seem in that country there is a machine that flies in the skies.
Someday I would like to see it, but it’s very far from here and I also just don’t have enough money.

When I walked outside, I felt the pleasant evening wind on my face.

You can see buildings scattered around with lights on.
I wonder what everyone does to pass time.

"I think it was somewhere here…..there it is."

I immediately took out my money and chose a drink. Roel said she wanted apple. . . . .
Beside the machine there was a person squatting.

"Umm…"

I tried speaking to them but the person didn't react.
I wonder if this guy is asleep. Let's try shaking him. I stretched my arm towards that person.
At that moment, the guy raised his face and leapt to bite my arm.
By a hair's breath I managed to dodge it by backing up. That guy, not wanting me to escape, leapt once again.
No, this thing, it isn't human.
Its body was covered with fur. Because it was squatting I didn't notice, but its head and body was 4 times larger than mine.

【Mysterious Monster Appeared!! HP 445】

From its mouth, long fangs became visible and its round eyes became bloodshot.

"Oo…Ooooooooo….."

It raised a groaning voice while it was brandishing his long arms, it was obstinately chasing me.
As if playing with it, I was pretty hard to catch. Then the monster jumped and kicked the building's wall with its foot and attacked me from the left.
I stepped backwards to avoid it, and without delay the monster turned around and attacked with his left leg.
With fast movement, even though the attack missed, without missing a beat it started its next move.
I wonder why this monster is inside this town…?
Even if I think about it I'm not going to come up with an answer. I should exterminate it.
It would be terrible if there was an uproar.
I don't have my weapon, but there isn't any other choice.
I waited until it threw out its arm to try and attack. I caught the arm and with my right hand I hit its stomach.
The monster's body started to convulse and it collapsed onto the ground.

【Ryua attacked! Mysterious Monster received 3529 damage!】
【Mysterious Monster was defeated!】

I looked at the monster that died, sprawled out on the ground. I noticed several shadows running towards this direction from a distance.
Those shadows were 3 men, all covered with armor.
One of them glanced at me and then the monster's corpse.

"Impossible. Are you the one that defeated this?"

The man had short trimmed blonde hair, an oval-shaped head, and slanted eyes.
He narrowed those eyes while staring at me.
I peacefully nod and, the other 2 guys quickly started cover the monster's corpse with a walnut colored cloth.

"You're…unarmed…? I can't believe this……"

I heard something clinking, and then as if blocking me he pushed something into my hand.

"Tonight, you didn't see anything."

And with those words, they vanished into the darkness of the night.
Of course, the monster's corpse isn't here anymore.
I don't understand. I looked at what was forced into my hand. I saw I was grasping 1000G.

Chapter 11 – Mysterious Ghost Mansion 1

[[Ghosts] appeared in my Mansion. I want Adventurers to exterminate them]
[Client : Francois]

"G-ghost?"

It seems the quest document in Roel's hand is about ghost subjugation.
Even in the <Caves of Hell> I fought Ghost-type monsters, but my sword isn't effective at all. They are terribly troublesome as enemies.
But I wonder if the ghost there is a monster.

"Well, this is impossible for now. Only magic is effective against Ghost-types, and I still haven't been able to use any."

"I can use magic attacks you know."

"Really?"

Her face had a look of surprise. She looked at me and the quest documents in her hand. Now that I think about it, I haven't told her I can't use that many spells yet. I cannot handle all attributes and my limit is only at the intermediate level of magic. Thus, I can't use any support or recovery magic.

"If that's the case, maybe we should accept it. It seems that we need a little more to become C rank."

"Is that so?"

"There is something like points for every quest. They say if you gather those points you can rank-up. It's something like a secret, how many points a quest gives and how many points

you have gathered. Earlier, the guild person was giving signs that we only need a few more to be C-rank, you know."

"So that's how it works huh? If its like that, then we need to work hard!"

We decided to take up the quest. But there were others that also accepted the quest.

"You accepted the quest earlier too, right? I'm quite anxious, so if you are going alone can she join you? I'm looking for someone who is a fighter to help her out."

"Grateful……I'm grateful…….grateful."

【Tolppo|Lv: 13|Class: Magician|Rank: C】

Saying that, the Glasses guy introduced her to us. It was that eerie person that we went with before, during our time as the relief team at <Strange Plains>. Her pointy hat and muffler completely covered her face, and her body was covered with a mantle and a robe. I can't really tell how old she is. Since she said that she was grateful she might be not that bad of a person but…she's still strange.

We immediately went towards the mansion where Francois-san was waiting. It's my first time seeing such a huge building. You could even call it amazingly spacious, to the point where I wondered what in the world they plan to do in here.
I wonder many tens of Roel's living room could be fit into here, it's just that big…
We knocked at the gate that leads inside, and from it an old lady came out. Golden necklace, golden bracelet and ring, ornaments with sparse jewels, and a red dress so bright it hurt the eyes, she was pretty much covered in gaudy materials and was fanning herself.
I don't know if it that was fashion, but I honestly just think her taste wasn't that good.

"So you're the Adventurers that took the quest. Come in."

The arrogant old lady crudely let us in the mansion. The ceiling was two stories high with a chandelier hanging from it. As I go to sit down I notice stone statues shaped like vases holding flowers at the corners of the guest room. Sitting on the soft sofa that our backs sink into, we listened to the details.

"Can you adventurers quickly exterminate it? Please do it at once."

"This ghost, where is it?"

"I don't know."

"Okay?"

Roel was somehow able to agree, but I didn't understand anything from way she talked.
Suddenly the chandelier started to shake violently and was swinging left and right.

"Wa-waa!"

Roel clung onto me. Tolppo was silently staring at the chandelier.

“S-see that’s it, right there. You guys should be able to exterminate it, right?”

The old lady was trembling. However, I don’t see the form of the ghost monster.

“This is…….monster…….different…….vengeful ghost…….”

Tolppo was standing alone and muttering. Not a monster but an vengeful ghost, I wonder what those are?
Suddenly the glass on the cupboard started to clatter and shake.

“Ryu-Ryua-chan!”

Roel was glued to me and was already crying.

“Geez! What’s going on!”

The old lady was hysterically shouting towards the empty air.

“A-a-at any rate, how many times has this happened?”

Roel who was still clinging on me was somehow able to inquire calmly.
The agitated old lady turned around and glared at us.

“Even I don’t know such things. I have told you everything already.”

“But we don’t have any clues to work with!”

“Won’t you shut up? It just started happening recently. If you can’t do it I’ll just ask the others to do this quest.”

She was almost hysteric as she explained it, since she was so scared. Roel was also terrified, she wasn’t leaving my side.
Tolppo who was next to us moved slightly.

“Stay at night…….vengeful ghost lively…….at night…….maybe….may…..”

“S-stay?!”

Roel stuttered while looking at Tolppo who was beside us.
Tolppo isn’t wrong, if we can’t see its appearance then we can’t exterminate it.
I don’t know if we can settle this at night but I can’t do anything about it now so I decided to follow her plan.
It’s good that that Roel and I are in the same room. Tolppo silently entered the next room.
The bed inside our room was big enough for 2 people, and on the wall there was a painting of some scenery hanging there. We were the only ones inside this spacious room.
The old lady said she will be providing us dinner for the night.
I went straight to the bed, laying on my back. Roel also got into bed and once again clung

onto me.

"Hey, Ryua-chan, I need to go to the toilet. Can we go together?"

"Sure, but be careful, you might fall asleep right away if you lie down."

"That's not true!"

I smiled a bit as Roel got mad at my teasing.
After that short exchange, there was a knock on our door.

"Just a moment….."

The door was opened, and Tolppo came in.
This girl doesn't have much of a presence at all, rather, she is way scarier than the ghost…

"Talk…….collected ideas……..share…"

Tolppo sat on one of the chairs inside the room and continued.

"Woman……only one in this big mansion…….servants…….not here…….living alone……?"

"Now that you say it, that's weird. I wonder if she's married?"

Roel looked over the inside of the room. There were more rooms than this one, I wonder what they are used for. When I originally entered this room I didn't notice it was somewhat dusty.
I wonder if all these rooms are cleaned…

*knock**knock**knock**knock**knock**knock*

It seems someone came to our door again.
I wonder if it's the old lady?
But it's still too early for dinner.

"Yes?"

Roel answered towards the door, but there was no response.
She opened the door and there was no one there.

"J-ju-just as I thought, this mansion is creepy!"

Saying that, Roel jumped towards me.
I don't feel anything wrong but…I don't know what to do here right now.

"…..several…..there is….."

Again she said something. Because she is talking in fragments it's difficult to understand her.
I feel bad for Roel but if things stay like this I feel like nothing will be accomplished. So let's

explore the mansion.

"So Roel, what will you do?"

She made a face like the world was ending for a moment. I think it would be better to do this alone, but in the end she came with me.
There were other rooms on our floor, stretching far down the corridor to our left and right. One by one we entered the rooms.
There weren't too many we could enter on the 2nd floor, since all the baths and kitchen were on the 1st floor. We tried opening each room as we went but it seems that we need a key to open them.
We went to the stairway that lead to the living room where we first talked with the old lady, and I saw a figure of a person about the size of a child making a *pitter patter* sound running from the bath and disappearing around the corner.

"Um, I wonder if the old lady has a child? I guess she wasn't living alone."

"Ryua-chan, please don't say something scary……"

Even if you cling to me, I can't do anything about it. Roel was pulling me hard and dragged me to the corner where the dressing room is. I didn't sense anyone at all. After we took a look at the dressing room we moved on and found a room as a wide as the one we were talking in earlier. I wonder, do they plan on using something with this much big? I should stop, thoughts like this won't have something come out.

"Nothing here, now I think we should go that way to the bath."

"I-it's already fine right, right?"

If you are this scared we should've abandoned this quest. That's what I thought but, it was Roel that chose this quest.

However, right now, at this time and place, I don't really know what I should do. 'I am sure that a Ghost-type monster will appear' is what I thought, but this situation doesn't make a lot of sense.
I wonder if we, D ranked adventurers, will be able to settle this incident.
I didn't see the particular rank designation for this quest so we may not be suitable for it. Even so, if the enemy won't come out then our way of doing things is wrong.

"Somehow this quest is harder than I thought."

"About that, I didn't think much of it when I accepted it, but in the quest document this was dated back to one year ago."

"What does that mean?"

"In short, in one year no one took this quest, or if they did they weren't able to settle this……"

“So it’s like that? If it’s that difficult they should’ve let an A rank take it.”

Roel wasn’t able to answer me regarding the rank issue. The client can designate the rank, but in some cases it seems that the guild is the one decides it.
I wonder if the old lady was the one who designated it, or was it the guild?
As I moved my eyes around, I suddenly noticed a door.
It looks like the toilet is in that room over there, so then I wonder what this room is? Let’s try opening it…and the knob won’t turn. I wonder if it’s because of the rust? I tried exerting strength on it.
thunk it made a sound and then the knob came off. Then even the door itself came off the hinges.

“Ah……”

“Ryua-chan…….”

Perhaps, no, for sure this time I really broke it. Oops…
Roel who was scared earlier was making a shocked expression.

“There’s no lock?”

I wasn’t really focusing on the murmuring of Roel. Behind the door that I broke I can see a stairway leading down. Everything in the mansion so far was western-styled but this is different…stairs made of concrete, leading down to an unlit place.

“I-is this the storage?”

Roel was clinging onto me so we wouldn’t be separated. She was repeatedly saying “not good” “not good” and was trying to drag me away. Unable to hold back my curiosity I tried going down the stairs.
There wasn’t any light, but I continued going down the dark stairs step by step.
At the bottom there was a small concrete pathway like before. In front of me, there was another door.
Like the previous one it doesn’t have any lock, it looked quite worn and rotting, and it doesn’t seem like it would open.

“Ryua-chan, let’s stop……if we enter by ourselves we will get scolded…”

“But the ghost may be inside this place.”

“Then, I wonder what you are doing?”

Looking up the stairs the old lady was there. Rather than calling it a woman, it looked more like a demon’s expression as we looked at her.

Chapter 12 – Mysterious Ghost Mansion 2

“Really, I wonder what kind of education you people had.”

"Sorry……."

All we did was lower our head as the old lady showed her anger.

"I'll look into the repair fees of the door and pay for it. But if you can't complete this quest I'll make sure to bring the bill and demand compensation. Okay? If you do this again, I'll have your neck."

We went back to our room in low spirits.
I wonder if Roel is still scared. She's probably only thinking about the repair fees for the door.
As for proof, she was focused on counting with her fingers.
As we walk in the room we see Tolppo standing still with her arm raised.

"What are you doing?"

I asked Tolppo what she is doing and she silently brought down her hands.

"Spirits……..not my specialty…..originally…it's the priest's……..thoughtless…..nay…..I'll do what I can do….."

It seems that Tolppo is anxious. Although in the end, I didn't understand why she was doing that pose earlier.
We exchange information about the incident that happened earlier.

"Basement……..I'm sure there is something there……."

"I wonder if the ghost is there? The old lady wants us to exterminate the ghost."

"That person, she's married right?"

Roel stood up, recalling something and murmured

"I think there was a ring on her finger."

Then that means…I wonder if she has a family.
Certainly, living alone in this big mansion would be lonely.
If that's the case i wonder where her family is.

"Expected……probably……lady…"

Tolppo said something and at the same time there was a knock on the door.

"Dinner is ready. Come to the first floor dining room. Be sure to drop by."

She emphasized the "drop by" part, and then the sound of the old lady's footsteps became distant outside of the room.
We went to the dining room to have dinner.
On top of the table there was beef steak, bread and salad lined up.

As if only just cooked, the steak was piping hot.
I wonder if it's fine to receive such a gorgeous meal.
About the incident earlier, I wasn't able to apologize.
The old lady, not saying anything, was just eating her steak.
Not knowing what would be good to talk about, we silently continued to eat.

"Ghost extermination……..tonight…….we will……."

Tolppo suddenly said that, and the expression of the old lady tensed up.
If things go on like this, we may not be able to fix her mood.
I stood up.

After eating, the bath was heated up and we went to have a bath.
The door I broke earlier that lead to the basement was replaced by a barrier-shaped thing that was forcibly inserted.
Turning my eyes away from it, I took of my clothes and entered the bath together with Roel.
Because it's wide enough that 3 people can easily fit, I invited Tolppo. But she declined right after I asked.
Even though we are both girls, I don't really understand her.
I haven't seen her face but from her voice she is probably a girl.

"It's my first time inside such a big bath…"

Roel submerged herself in the hot bath and played with the water.
Compared to this bath, ours was quite small for 2 people to enter simultaneously.
On the wall there was a stone statue of lion's head and from its mouth bath water was gushing out from it.
Thinking about it, you'd probably need a lot of money to make something like this.
Though, that's pretty obvious so why even think about it.

"I wonder how many years it has been since I entered a bath with another person?"

"Eh, Roel, was there someone who was living with you before?"

Because I thought that she was living alone up till now, it was quite unexpected to hear that.
Now that I think about it, I don't know much about Roel's past.

"It was a long time ago, there was a person that helped me before. But that person…isn't here anymore……."

Isn't here anymore…sympathizing with her I stop pursuing the subject..
I didn't know there was such a person living with Roel.
I was in the <Caves of Hell> for 10 years, so it was natural for Roel to have some [drama] too.
I wonder what she was feeling, but I'm not good enough to tell that from a glance.

"I don't have any memories of when I was a kid……"

No memories? I really want to know, but that's bad manners. I don't want to say it.
I only stayed silent listening to Roel talk.

At that time.

Someone was at the other side of the frosted glass.
It was directly behind Roel, so she wasn't able to notice.
It was quite a vague image, but I saw a girl standing there.
She was standing and looking towards us…observing us. That's what I felt.
I wonder if I saw her during the day?

Abruptly the lights within the bath went out.

"Kiii~!"

I hug Roel who was panicking to calm her down.
In the dark I wasn't able to confirm it but I felt that the girl watching us was no longer there…
While I was hugging Roel, I slowly led us outside the bathroom.
I timidly opened the frosted glass door and started fumbling around to turn the lights back on.
When I finally found the switch, I was met with *click* *click*. The lights won't turn on.
We had no choice and decided to wear our clothes from earlier.
I wonder if Roel was at loss of words because she is scared, she was rather quiet.
We held hands as we left the room, but on the way it was pretty dark.
I wonder what the old lady was doing, she should've been in trouble since she can't switch on the light.
First of all lets meet up with Tolppo.

When my eyes got used to the darkness we followed the stairs going to the 2nd floor.
There was no one in the living room.
I wonder if the old lady and Tolppo were on the 2nd floor?
To not fall while climbing up the stairs, I was pulling Roel's hand.

The corridor on the 2nd floor was quiet.
It was dark to our left and right, 'It was as if this corridor leads to hell' was what I imagined.
With this much darkness, it had an eerie atmosphere.
Inside the darkness, Roel was attached to me, not letting go.

"After we talk with Tolppo about this we need to think of what we should do next, Roel."

Roel stayed silent and kept clinging onto my hand.
I didn't think that this ghost extermination would give me such a hard time.
As per usual, the enemy won't show itself. I don't know what course of action to take.
I wonder if the girl I saw at the bath room was the ghost.
If that's the case, why would it do something this?
That girl should've been a normal girl before it became a ghost, I wonder what kind of reason it has?

bang *bang* from far away I could hear a door opening and closing.
Immediately after that, the doors inside the corridor opened and closed again.

*bang**bang**bang**bang*

I could hear the doors opening and closing by itself in the dark corridor.
If you compare the darkness to the <Caves of Hell>, this is nothing. I couldn't feel any presence while walking before, but now I'm certain I can sense different presences.

"Roel, be sure to not let go of me."

Roel increased her grip on my hand.
As I expected, walking became harder.

"You don't need to hold it that hard. I won't run you know."

"Ryua-chan! Where are you~?"

From far away I could hear Roel's voice.
No, Roel should be here…not letting go of my hand…

"Ryua-cha~n! Why did you left me behind? Ryua-chan!"

I should've been leading her.
The proof is here.

No.

Now, rather than Roel clinging on me, whoever it was had a much smaller stature.
For some reason the grip strength kept increasing.
Long hair, white one-piece dress, small hands that were pure white…rather than saying that, it should be a thin arm.
It should've been dark, but for some reason I could see better right now.
Then it slowly looked up at me.

There were no eyeballs. There were only 2 holes, filled by darkness.
A wrinkly face that doesn't suit a child, it faced towards me.
I couldn't feel any temperature but I could only feel a chill passing to me.

Chapter 13 – Ghost Mansion of Mystery 3

I was shaking my hand trying to get her off, but her strength was like that of a vice, she wouldn't let go.
I can't think of her as a little girl with this much strength..
I knew that Roel was safe, but for some reason I couldn't use my voice.
No, I wonder if it would even be a good idea to call her in this situation.
Even though the ghost was a kid, I didn't hold back.
Since she wouldn't stop clinging to me I slammed her body against the wall.

The wall made a crumbling sound as it collapsed, but she was still attached.
I don't care about what has to be done in this situation.

"W-what are you? why are you doing this?"

"Le-s pl-y"

It seems like her vocal cords are broken, I was only able to hear a mumbling voice from her hollow face.
I can't understand what she wants from me, and I shouldn't try to.
In the first place I should be exterminating this child according to the quest.
It's sad, but I have no choice.
I left my sword in our room, but my left hand was free since it wasn't being gripped.
It's a Ghost-type so a magic attack should be effective.

【Ryua cast Lightning Bolt!】

The little girl was directly hit by flash of lightning.
Being more or less attached to her I also took some damage,
I didn't really have a choice. As expected she reflexively let go of me.

【Ryua received 3100 damage! HP 37363/ 40463 】
【Little Ghost Girl didn't receive any damage HP ???/???】

"Le-s pl-y~ Onee-chan."

Crack *Snap* Her head began to turn left and right, then her body began to shake as if rebelling.
Her head was slanted to the right, and then the right half of her body bent backward and lowered.
It was as if she doesn't have any bones, it was such an ominous movement.
She kept repeating those movements as she came closer to me.
I heard a noise from my side, I just noticed Roel was running this way.

"W-w-what…"

Being very scared, Roel wasn't able to come to terms with the current situation.
Roel wasn't moving her hand. Closing the distance, I hit the face of the <Little Ghost Girl> with my fist.
I saw the <Little Ghost Girl> get blown up into the air. As she landed her body swayed, recovering its ominous pose.

【Little Ghost Girl didn't receive any damage HP ???/???】

She kept her posture but her body started to shake like it did before.
This was the first time I fought something like this…I don't really know what I should do.
I wonder, could I fight back if I had my sword?
If I invoke its effect I'm sure……

"Le.t.. pl.a…y"

Fighting with me was playing to her it seems…but I wonder if it's really like that.
For such an opponent to exist, I never considered I would encounter something like this.
Exiting from the 100th floor underground, I wonder if that place was actually just the starting point.
It's been a long time since I tasted helplessness like that place. Before I noticed it, Roel was beside me.

"Ryua-chan, she hasn't moved for a while now…"

Then the little girl stretched its withered branch-like arm towards us.
I covered Roel to protect her. The <Little Ghost Girl> stopped her movements, seeming timid unlike before.

"Little girl…….enemy……..not……."

Before I had noticed, Tolppo was behind me.

Roel hugged the little girl.

"Sorry."

Roel said only one word and the little girl didn't do anything.
From the hollow eyes of the little girl, a single tear fell.
While Roel was hugging her, the little girl disappeared.
I didn't understand what was going on. I was only able to watch them.

"Roel, just now?"

"I don't know, but that child was not evil. I just…felt it."

"…….This one"

Tolppo was pointing to a man with blood coming out of his head.
He was crying as well, but it wasn't the same as the little girl. His eye was bleeding and it looked like tears.
I don't get it. I saw his tears flowing from there, just like the little girl.
The ghost guy didn't move his legs, it just floated as it went down the stairs.
Tolppo chased after him, and we followed after Tolppo.

The ghost went through the living room, then dressing room, and then stopped at a door. It was the door that I broke during the day.
The ghost pointed at the door and then began turning transparent from his legs and finally his to his head, and he disappeared.

"Isn't this place……"

I removed the barrier-like wall that had been inserted with my hand. It was somehow my role to do that it seems, and then the door behind it was quickly detached and moved.

"Go down……."

Tolppo continued to go down the dark stairway.
I wonder what the ghost meant when he pointed at this place.
That ghost wasn't evil either. I wonder, are there any ghosts here with ill intentions…?
I hadn't come to a conclusion before I reached the bottom of the stairs.

"It doesn't look like the door has a lock."

Tolppo opened the door, and it made a dull sound as it was opened.
It was so dark I couldn't see anything.

【Tolppo cast Light!】

There was a light coming out from Tolppo's palm.

"Dungeon exploring…….this is……..indispensable"

Why bring up a dungeon, I thought for a brief moment.
I thought that after being able to see we would be in a room underground but instead there was a long passageway.
I wonder why there's such thing underneath the mansion.
That old lady got very mad last time we came here, but there is probably something that she doesn't want us to see in this place.
When we started to walk down the passage, something floated in the air towards us.

【Mortal Ghost appeared! HP 322】

From its head to its chest were bones, and the lower half of its body wasn't there.
It was splendidly big and was blocking our way, suddenly without saying anything it started to attack.

【Mortal Ghost cast Darkness!】

Mist started appearing in the air and we covered ourselves.
Roel and Tolppo were both completely bewildered from this, so they weren't able to sense the preemptive attack or ready themselves so they received damage.

【Roel received 32 damage! HP 31/63】
【Tolppo received 22 damage! HP 74/96】
【Ryua didn't receive any damage! HP 37363/40463】

I wasn't able to completely defend Roel.
At the same time I remembered that I hadn't recovered from the magic damaged I received from myself earlier.

Tolppo quickly did an aria-like magic and immediately counter attacked.

【Tolppo cast Blazeshot!】

The bundles of flame became something like a bullet and crashed into the bone monster.
The bone monster raised something like a roar as it was enduring the burning flames.

【Mortal Ghost was given 86 damage! HP 250/322】

The bone monster was still able to fight. It was making a knocking sound, bones hitting each other as it started to come this way as if provoked.

"Strong…….even though……..weakness……flame……."

I think that Tolppo's magic may not be that effective.
She stepped back and prepared again.
Roel cast <Heal> to cure Tolppo's injury.
The bone monster brandished its arm and swung towards Tolppo.
However, it wasn't able to hit her.
I had struck its arm first, attempting to break it.
I didn't want to do it, but I followed up with a straight directly to the face of the skeleton.
The cranium of the skeleton was smashed into pieces, and I followed up with a kick to its ribcage.
The pieces of its body and head fell down on ground, and it started to slowly vanish. Before long it had completely disappeared.

【Ryua's attack gave the Mortal Ghost 3879 damage!】
【Mortal Ghost was defeated! HP 0/322】

"We finally came across a normal monster."

I was the only that looked relieved. I might not be able to see Tolppo's expression, but she seemed to be in shock about what had just happened.
While she was in the middle of chanting, she had completely stopped to watch me.
But since I forgot to bring my sword, I really shouldn't bite off any more than I can chew.
I was thinking of going back to retrieve it, but I felt like I would have lost sight of the ghost.
I'm really uneasy about the matter regarding the <Little Ghost Girl>.

"Ryua……..what are you…….?"

I don't know how to answer, so I ignored it.
'What are you', huh?
I wonder what I am now, since I've lost absolutely everything.
I blink my eyes. Everything will be fine for now as long as I can walk together with Roel.

"It would be quite troublesome if monsters started appearing one after another like that ghost. Let's continue before that happens."

As if deceiving myself, we light up our way and started to walk.
I don't know if Tolppo will believe me if I talked about what happened to me in the past 10 years.
Nevertheless, my attack against the little girl didn't work even though it worked on the monster I just defeated now. I wonder how it works…
It seems like I still have a long way to go. There are a lot things I need to learn about the outside world.
Through this quest, I can understand a little bit more about it.
Rather than worrying, it would better to be proactive and think about these things.

Chapter 14 – Mysterious Ghost Mansion 4

I had originally thought that this underground area would have a complicated inner structure and was worried that I wouldn't know where to start, but there was only a straight passage stretching into the distance.
We were attacked many times by the same kind of monster from earlier but I defeated them all.
Because of the range the ghost's magic had, protecting Roel and Tolppo became troublesome.
But since I have been fighting a long time by myself, I wasn't afraid of the magic's range.
"Ryua…..way too strong……"

Tolppo has been carefully watching me the whole time.
I wonder if I should talk to her about what happened to me at the <Caves of Hell>?
It'll have to be later though, right now we don't have the luxury of spare time.
On our way down the passage, we eventually came upon an old-looking door.

"I wonder if this is the end?"

"Someone open it? I guess I'll open it? Then, I'm opening it."

There was a hand clinging around my waist, so it was quite hard to move.
I gently grasped Roel's hand and moved it away.
I wonder where the <Little Ghost Girl> who Roel hugged earlier went? I haven't even see a shadow of her since it happened.

"Here….there's something….."

Tolppo murmured, and her tone made Roel's fear go up a notch. In one go I quickly open the door.

Behind the door there was Francois-san, slovenly hanging from above.
A rope was around her neck, and her mouth was wide open dripping vomit.
Starting from her skirt and running down her leg, excretion dripped onto the floor.

"IYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!"

Finally Roel's fear reached its breaking point. It doesn't seem like she's going to separate from me now.
Honestly, I wasn't able to hide my shock either.
I unconsciously moved back and collided with Tolppo.
I wonder what was going through his, no her mind when she saw the corpse.

There was also the corpse of a mummified little girl and the skeletal corpse of what I assume is a man in the room as well.
It appears that the girl who clung on me and the man who led us to this place are both here.
I wonder, just what the heck happened?
Why did Francois commit suicide here, of all places?
I wonder if this quest will end filled with mystery…

"W-what are we supposed to do…..?"

"…….not yet."

Tolppo's expression completely changed and pointed at Francois.
Francois' exhausted head faintly moved.
Suddenly her head started moving.

"Wa-waa!"

It leaked out a terrible, hoarse voice.

The head of the corpse faced this way.
The loose tongue from her mouth was dangling out. Her eyes on that deathly pale face opened and looked directly at us.
Her neck, like a snail, squeezed itself out from the rope.
Her head bent 90 degrees to the side as she landed on the ground, pigeon-toed. Her gaze was on us.
In the next instant, I can only describe it as expanding and contracting at will, its arm stretched forward aiming towards me.

【Francois appeared! Francois suddenly attacked!】

"Ah!"

I protected Tolppo who was behind me by deflecting the arm with my right hand.
After I blocked the attack the arm fell to the floor, and then as if nothing happened the arm of <Francois> contracted back to its original form.

"W-w-what……..?"

Barely holding on to her staff, there were tears coming out of Roel's eyes.
I won't let that thing touch Roel or Tolppo, no matter what.
Even so I feel uneasy about this, especially since when she hit me earlier it had the same sensation as when I had hit the <Little Ghost Girl>. It's as if it was rubber, but when I hit it I

felt no resistance.
I wonder if this is the same as the from earlier?
Even though I defeated that bone monster…

"Yoouuu-n-eed-to-pro-pe-ly-stah-dee"

<Francois>' mouth was making a gurgling noise as blood was coming out of it.

"iii-ven-eef-yoooo-me-ik-a-smo-ol-mee-ste-ik"

Every time <Francois> talks, bloods spills out of her mouth. Tolppo fired off some magic.

【Tolppo cast Blazeshot!】

A large flame bullet hit <Francois> and she was blown away with her body on fire. After she hit the ground, she just laid there.
Before long, the fire went out. I didn't see any burns on her body as she stood up.

【Francois didn't receive any damage! HP 0/0】

"This is…..<Vengeful> ghost-type……as I thought…..useless……"

"<Vengeful> ghost-type?"

It was the first time I heard that word. I wondered if it wasn't actually a Ghost-type.

"<Vengeful> ghost-type……monster…….wrong…….before becoming…….Ghost-type……"

It seems a <Vengeful Ghost> is the state before becoming a Ghost-type.
Then…that means that it's not a monster, and because it's a <Vengeful> ghost our attacks aren't effective.

"It's the first time I……"

I became scared, and Roel powerlessly dropped her staff on the floor.
As I looked at her shivering, I felt helpless.
Even though I promised to protect her I got utterly frightened.
I should be fighting to give her peace of mind, yet I still became afraid.

<Francois> was hitting the floor with her stretched arm as if she was a child. I stepped forward towards her.

"Old lady, don't you want to kill me? But that's impossible just so you're aware."

I began to provoke her. I was cautious as I could be as I faced her.
I wasn't sure if I was able to do it properly, but <Francois>' eyes were staring towards me.
Actually, the attack I took from her earlier wasn't that big of a deal.
The problem is its invulnerability… I wonder what I should do about that.
Even though it died, it's kind of ironic that it's invulnerable. Even so, that invincibility was

vexing me.
The stretched arm that was aiming for me was shaking. She was trying to hit me with her palm from the side, like a slap.

"It's useless you know!"

I took the arm with my left hand, and as I twisted it I flung her to the ground.
This monster doesn't feel any pain in its current state, it seems.

The arm on the floor twitched and crept up my leg at high speed.
It grasped my leg and at the same time its other hand approached my neck.

"Ah, guuh……y-you……"

"Ryua-chan!"

It was the same as that time with the <Little Ghost Girl>.
No matter how much you pull, its unbelievable strength pins you down.
Even though I trained so much at the <Caves of Hell>, it's completely useless against this <Vengeful Ghost>.
Roel nearly went mad and started to pull the hand of <Francois> away from me.

"You!! You!!"

But since it was impossible for me, Roel's delicate strength won't be able to do it.
I don't know how, or if, Tolppo was participating in this fight.

"What are you doing! Let go of Ryua-chan!"

<Francois>' long nails started to dig into my neck, and my breathing started to get rough.
With a cracking sound, <Francois>' head started to turn left and right 180 degrees from it original position while looking at me from a distance.
This was clearly a return provocation from before. I became serious about crushing her arm, but with its hard rubber-like sensation it didn't even make her flinch.

I won't let myself die here.
There is something I have to do here.
Something like you……..

///Tolppo's Perspective///

I felt something when she easily pulverized the <Mortal Ghost>.
But, this time I felt bloodthirst releasing from her, incomparable to before.
This morning, that girl and Roel has a good relationship, innocently chatting with each other.
But right now it seems like she's a different person…no, she seems inhuman.
I don't want to approach that girl.
As I was thinking that, I noticed her peeling the fingers off of the <Vengeful Ghost>'s hand and throwing them away.

I took a couple of steps away from her.

///Ryua's Perspective///

"Ryua?……who?"

I felt that Tolppo had backed away.
My fingers were currently dug into the corpse's hands.
I peeled its fingers off of me, and with all my strength I threw it at the wall.
The arm fell from the wall to the floor and it immediately started to crawl towards me.

"<Heal>!"

Roel was frantically using <Heal> on me.
I'm grateful, but I ought to do something about that disgusting arm.
It came crawling to me. 'As if I would let you do that again' I thought, and I stomped on it with my foot.
Roel was still using <Heal> on me.

The arm under my foot started to squirm in a weird way.
Its dreadful strength that was trying to escape from my foot became faintly weaker.

"Roel……heal more……."

I wonder what Tolppo's idea is, urging Roel to use <Heal> more?
There was apparently no need to say that, she was already wholeheartedly using <Heal> continuously.
<Francois>' arm convulsed 3 times, and the strength that was being used to escape became weaker.
Before long, the arm that was bathed in <Heal>'s light vanished.
The monster from far away raised a shrill cry while holding the shoulder that the arm belonged to.

"The hand…disappeared……."

The first one voiced their surprise was Roel.
I didn't understand what just happened.

"Heal……it……."

I don't really know why, but <Heal> seems to be that guy's weakness.

"So that's it…since the undead is injured already, healing causes pain."

"Roel……that guy….."

"But, I can't reach from here…."

If that's the case, then it's my turn.

I dashed from the side toward <Francois>.
Even though <Francois> was in agony, she once again tried to catch me with her arm. I won't let that happen twice, don't make light of me.
I kick <Francois> from behind, then I turned around and kick her again while she was on the floor.
She didn't really have a reaction to my kicks which were blowing her away.
I jumped forward, going even faster than <Francois> who was flying from my kicks.
As I caught up, I slammed her head onto the floor making her grovel.

"Eh….ah…..well"

Roel was perplexed as I was pinning <Francois>' head to the floor.

"Quickly, do it now!"

If this guy stands up I won't be able to stop it.
I had shouted due to the urgency.

"Y-yeah……<Heal>!"

I wanted to block my ears since the <Vengeful Ghost>'s loud groan was reverberating inside the underground room.
Roel was so surprised that her hand briefly stopped moving, but I'm not going to complain.

The healing light continued to pour onto <Francois>' body.
Just like her arm, we witnessed <Francois>' body slowly vanish…

At least, that's what should have happened.

Chapter 15 – Mysterious Ghost Mansion Part 5

<Francois>' body twitched and then sprung up.
Before long, <Francois> was twitching rapidly and started to bend into the shape of a bow.
At that instant her head expanded to about 3 times its original size, and her skin and eyeballs fell off and hit the ground.
Her head was swollen, and she had turned into a skinless, bony monster with an unnaturally large body.
During all of this, it was rotting away.
From the cracks of its body there were maggots pouring out.
These changes made it look less and less like <Francois>, I don't think there's anything left of her in this thing…

"Urp……."

Roel held her mouth and was somehow able to endure.
The strange rotting smell in the air only added to the disgust and hatred that I felt.
What could be driving her to do this? What could she want to do, even though it meant

turning into something like this?
I won't let something like you defeat me.

【Francois' form changed!】
【Living Worth appeared! HP 1222】

"Surprisingly…….<Vengeful Ghost>……monster now……."

"A monster now? So then, that thing is now definitely a monster?

"Perhaps……"

Tolppo muttered, sounding unsure. If it is a monster, this is a good opportunity for me.
Since <Francois> changed from a <Vengeful> ghost-type to just a ghost-type, it means she's the same as those guys we ran into earlier.
In short, I can crush <Living Worth> with all of my strength.
Even though I say that, <Living Worth>'s atmosphere is way different from those previous mobs. This guy became way stronger than them.
Before Tolppo and Roel get hurt, I should finish this.

"A-a-a-a-a-a-a"

From the <Living Worth>'s voice, it seems that no longer has vocal cords…no, this kind of monster can't talk.
I decided to aim at the unsteady head and delivered a kick to it will all my might.
I really want to avoid touching this thing with my hands.
On contact the head exploded and some rotten fragments from corpse scattered around the room.

【Ryua attacked!】
【Living Worth received 4456 damage!】
【Living Worth HP 1/1222】

I think I completely lost control of my strength there, the body was barely able to hold on to its head and it was staggering.
This time I jumped and delivered a kick aimed towards the body.
My strike blew <Living Worth>'s body inside the wall, and some chunks from the wall fell on the the floor.
It felt different from earlier, I'm sure there was a reaction. But somehow….it's strange.

【Ryua attacked!】
【Living Worth received 4123 damage!】
【Living Worth HP 1/1222】

<Living Worth>'s body slowly stood up, staggering just like before.
I wonder if this is some kind of resurrection?
No.
At the <Caves of Hell> there was a monster I fought that had a fierce vigor and its wounds

just closed up. This situation is different.

"MAA..III..FA…MEE……LEEE"

The head shouldn't be able to do speak, I'm sure I heard that from its body.
Roel went near the monster's body.

"Roel! Its dangerous!"

"I can't watch this anymore!"

Roel's eyes are red from crying.
Without a trace of fear she stood before the monster.
The monster was staggering and seemed like it would fall any moment now, but it was somehow able to manage staying upright.

"Francois-san, please stop it now……I don't know what happened, but if you had any regrets please let us help you as much as we can.
So please, be at ease……."

After saying that she used <Heal> on Francois.

"IS…IT…FAA…IIIIN…..FFFOOOR…..ME..TO..BE..AT….EASE?"

Francois' body was wrapped in a faint light, and then she disappeared.

【Roel used Heal on Living Worth!】
【Living Worth HP 0/1222】
【Living Worth was defeated!】

As it happened, tears were falling from Roel's eyes.

As if the fight earlier was a lie, the underground room was silent.
All that remained was the corpse of the mummified little girl and the skeletal corpse of that man.
Thanks to Roel, we were able to resolve the situation.
However, after all that had happened, this ending was somehow disappointing.

There, in the middle of the underground room, the little girl and the man stood before us.
They weren't corpses, I guess this is what they had looked like.
Roel immediately ran towards them.
The two smiled towards us.
And then both of them turned into light, and the room became white.

///

I noticed that we were watching a family of 3 at a dining table.
They were happily sitting together as a family.

Next we saw Francois and a woman we didn't know eating at the table.
The woman was boasting about her own child.
Francois was doing it as well.
Francois smiled.

In the child's room, Francois was scolding a little girl.
The little girl was forced to sit and study at her desk.

Francois was condemning the man.
The profit of the man's business, the grapevine field, is declining. She was earnestly mad about that matter.

There are 2 women and Francois.
One of the women was boasting about her sparkling necklaces.
Shortly after, the other woman was boasting about her clothes.
Francois was frantically making a smile.

The man was sitting on the sofa and was holding his head.
Francois did nothing but rebuke him.
With his patience at its end, he hit Francois with all his might.

The little girl tried to leave the room on her own.
She was tied to her stool and wasn't able to get out to the toilet.
The little girl continued to cry her mother's name.

Francois was scowling at her household finances book.
With a grim expression, she counted something with her fingers in one hand.

When the man saw her daughter's condition, the daughter was already dead tired and had collapsed onto the floor.
The man pulled Francois away from the little girl to help her, and Francois was trying to stop the man.
The both of them were struggling, and then Francois was pushed away.
The man carried the daughter outside of the room.

Francois threw a vase at the back of the man's head.
The man fell to the floor and neither he or the little girl moved, the man's head was bleeding profusely.

The man was being dragged by the delicate arm of Francois.
Taking breaks here and there, she she eventually reached the underground room.
She kept both of them in there.

Before long, the bizarre phenomenon started happening at the mansion, tormenting Francois.

—Once again the light spread out, and we had returned to the underground room.

/ / /

It was over in an instant, but we saw what happened and everything fell into place.
Well.
Actually it was the ghosts that showed us, so we didn't really see it firsthand.

"Even though at the beginning they were living together happily….."

"I can't believe it either….this is so wrong."

In the cold underground room, 2 corpses were laid down.
Even though their bodies were dead, they were still alive.
If they hadn't made that mistake, their appearance wouldn't have ended up like this.
I wonder what would I do, waiting for an unknown future.
I won't be able to answer that even if I think about it.

Chapter 16 – Mysterious Ghost Mansion End

"Yes, I will deliver your part of the reward."

When we came out of the mansion it was already dark, so we decided to split up and meet at the guild in the morning.
When we explained what had happened, the glasses person…..Rintei-san really didn't believe us.
The guild people investigated the mansion and by the time they had finished it was already evening.
The end result was that it had been confirmed that everything was resolved.
Everything about this quest was strange, it totally exceeded our expectations.

"The client Francois' corpse has been found. According to the soldiers, one year has passed since her death. She hung herself in her room but because the rope was so decayed she fell on the floor, rotting, and was in an awful state."

I couldn't believe what I was hearing.
I'm sure that she was still alive when we had discussed the state of the mansion.
She even made dinner.

"Th-then Francois-san who we talked with…"

"Was in fact a <Vengeful> ghost."

"Wu-wwhaaaaaaaat~~~!"

Rintei raised his glasses with his middle finger.
Roel opened her mouth shouting "Wu-whaaaaaa!"
Even though she did a good job on this quest, it seems she wasn't aware of some things.
At any rate, is it true that she committed suicide before she gave out the request?

For such a thing to be left alone for a year…

“It seems I was quite inept about handling the quest documents. Why didn’t I notice that this quest had been here for a whole year…”

“Weren’t there any others who took the quest?”

“Yes, let me just…huh? Where did the quest documents go?”

Suddenly, Rintei started fumbling around searching for the quest documents.
He searched everywhere. Under the counter and on the floor, but in the end the quest documents weren’t found.

“I just had it here, didn’t I? That’s weird, it couldn’t have been blown away by the wind…”

“Yeah, it was placed on top of the counter. If someone took it I would’ve noticed it.”

It was as if it wasn’t there to begin with, that one sheet of paper just suddenly vanished.

“The one who found the quest document originally was Roel-san, right?”

“Yes, I was looking for a quest for D ranks.”

“Even so, 1 whole year…Fumu, it’s weird for that to have been here.”

When Francois committed suicide, the quest documents should have disappeared.
The quest we took just now may have been the Ghost’s request.
Ok, that just sounds stupid. Though regardless of how it sounds, it just happened. It was a situation I really couldn’t explain.

“The lady…perhaps…wanted to be saved…waiting eternally…someone…to save her…”

“As I thought, it may have been her lingering feelings…There isn’t anything I can do about that.”

Well, disregarding how it all ended, there aren’t any strange phenomena or suffering spirits in that mansion now.
It’s true that I was elated and felt a sense of achievement, but I only solved one case.
With that in mind, I shouldn’t let myself be satisfied with just this.

【Received 4000G reward!】

“Now both of your ranks have been raised from D to C. Congratulations.”

“T-thank you very much!”

“No, it was my fault to begin with”

I finally raised myself to C rank.

With this, we can start taking higher level quests.
Though if I want to raise my rank up to B it seems that I have to take an examination.
I'm currently a Sword Fighter, but if I changed to a higher level class then I can use more techniques.
I'll become much stronger and be able to quickly improve.
Doing that…I would be one step closer to the "One-winged demon".

That demon that destroyed my village…I will kill it with my own hands.

"AAA~~!!! You guys are already C rank?!"

I flinched at the sudden loud voice.
I turned around and saw Aude carrying his spear.

"Good, good! Hey, Rintei-san! I worked hard enough so it should be fine for me as well, right?"

Rudely making his entrance, he pushed himself between us and went over to the counter.

"Aude-san, only a little more. Give it your best."

"Kaaaa~~~! You, I will absolutely outrank you!"

Aude just finished settling his quest, and proceeded to measure his level.
Before I knew it he became a rival. This is clearly going to be a pain.
Just now with Aude being here, with his sudden appearance and rudeness, made my mood a little sour.

The results of checking our levels were as follows; Roel's level raised by 4 and it seems Tolppo's level raised by 2.
The bone monster might have given us a large sum of experience, and Francois may have as well.

【Ryua Lv: ??|Class: Sword Fighter|Rank: C】
【Roel Lv: 9 |Class: Healer|Rank: C】
【Tolppo Lv: 15|Class: Magician|Rank: C】

"My level su~~~~~re raised!"

Aude shouted from the neighboring box as he was coming out from it.

/ / /

"Thank you for today."

"Grateful…to you."

I wonder what she meant by that.
Even after all of that, I still wasn't able to understand this girl.

“<Vengeful> ghost-type…outside of calculation…both of you…grateful.”

“For such a thing to be in this world…”

I remembered the strength of that <Vengeful> ghost.
Was that really a <Vengeful> ghost?

“Vengeful ghost-type…simply strength…wrong…regrets and thought…is its power…but Ryua…you defeated it…who are you?”

If that’s the case, their strength gets stronger depending on the person’s thoughts and regrets.
But I won’t yield to something like that.
I won’t just simply lay down and die like that.

Now onto a different issue. I wonder if this girl will listen and believe me, unlike the others.

“Tolppo, have you heard of the <Caves of Hell>?”

“Hell…?”

I talked about the 10 years of my life.
I couldn’t see her expression, but I understood that she was seriously listening.

“Ryua’s story…if true…amazing…Hell…King of Destruction…heard something like that…somewhere…”

She thought about it for a while, but it seems she can’t recall it.
Roel was also surprised.
Now that I think of it, I hadn’t told her yet.

“Ryua-chan, that’s amazing…”

I even could even hear Roel swallowing her saliva.
So, within 10 years I was able to reach the end of the 100 floor dungeon and conquer it.
It is something I’m proud of myself for accomplishing.
No matter how dreadful a <Vengeful> ghost is, it won’t be able to dent my pride.
That dungeon…now that I think about it, why did I enter that scary dungeon?
Maybe because I was a child back then.
I totally can’t recall anything about that time.

“I’ll be off here…return to the inn…Ryua, Roel…good night…”

“Yeah, good night. Don’t stay up too late.”

I tried being a little worried, but Tolppo wasn’t particularly responding.
As I thought, this girl doesn’t like being attached.

“You guys…if you have the opportunity…visit…Wizard Kingdom…that…hometown…mine.”

“Wizard Kingdom?”

“It’s a country that develops magic techniques, and is a country full of wizards. I heard that their livelihood is supported completely by magic. Tolppo-chan was a magician there, right.”

Tolppo was starting to walk off as she nodded.
Wizard Kingdom…someday I would like to go there.

Tolppo made an awkward goodbye and walked towards the inn.
We also went back to our home.
Yesterday and today, it was very exhausting.
Ghost-type, Vengeful ghost, becoming a monster, and then Wizard Kingdom.
It was my first time hearing about these things.
As I thought, there’s a mountain of things that I don’t know about the outside world.

“Wasn’t she a little weird, that girl?”

“Yeah, but I think she was just awkward.”

I feel like no matter who Roel is with she would always be gentle with her words.
But I wonder if I was of much use to her this time.

“My stomach sure is empty, and I imagine yours is as well. I haven’t been shopping yet so are the leftover ingredients fine?”

“It’s totally fine, no matter what you make I will eat it.”

“Then, salt soup.”

“No!”

I know that it was a joke but I still pout about it.
Roel was giggling as she smiled, she was thinking of another dish.
Today we were also able to survive, I reflected on the quest while sleeping in a narrow bed.
Tomorrow…is another day, different as always for an adventurer.

I recalled the monster that attacked me while I was on a stroll that one night.
I wonder, what was that monster? Who were those people?
I didn’t want to make Roel uneasy so I hadn’t told her about it.
It’s starting to bother me…but if I talk about it, something might happen to her and she may get hurt…
It would be better if I don’t talk about it, ever.
I think things are fun right now.

The lasting lights of other buildings reminded me of our peaceful and everyday lives.

///Tolppo’s Perspective///

I turned myself away from those 2 and walked while looking at the sky.
Today, if they weren't there I definitely would've died during the quest.
We were somehow able to communicate and soothe the spirits of the little girl and her father. That underground room I was inside of…it seemed like a place that was part of a completely different dimension.
That <Mortal Ghost> is something B rank Adventurers should be able to easily defeat. I've had a hard time working in a party.
And Ryua, that girl simply used her bare arms to defeat it.
It seems she trained at the <Caves of Hell>, but I haven't heard of that dungeon.

——wait, no, I think I heard about it… somewhere…

However, I can't remember so I can't do anything about it. If I ask Sage Hasto-sama he might know of it.
I'm baffled by Ryua, but I'm more concerned about Roel, that girl.
I haven't heard that using Heal on the Vengeful ghost can make it into a Monster.
Originally, a class with a specialty suited for that kind of quest, Exorcist, should be required.
Then the Ghost-type monsters, I still don't understand much about them.
It may have been because the general concept of humans dying and the aftermath is still an unknown domain.
The living dead, in most cases, endangers people.
I wonder if there is an explainable phenomenon that causes these outrageous events.
It's really troublesome that there are many monsters like that, and there is a specialty class for dealing with each of them.
It may have been a good quest to take, but back then I thought of abandoning it.
But because the 2 of them came along I felt like I had to do it, though I had a pleasant feeling as I accepted it.

"Those two…who are they…?"

My journey to study is about to end, it's a good time to return to the Wizard Kingdom.
I may learn something if I ask Vardam-sama.
Inside my mind, even more than studying, the existence of those 2 left their mark.
In the morning, I'll leave the inn then go trough Avangarde Kingdom Castle to the harbor.
I'm looking forward to an answer for my question, so I quickly went towards the inn.

Monster Book

【Large Ravenous Cobra】
It doesn't have any poison , but this ferocious cobra can swallow an adult whole.
Due to its flexible movements, adventurers who are inexperienced in battle won't be able to catch it.
With its strangling strength, it can easily crush a log.

【Mysterious Monster HP:445】
It suddenly appeared in the town where Ryua lives. An oddly shaped monster.

It’s bigger than an adult male, and it is terribly quick-witted.
If the adventurers fighting it are not skilled, they would be instantly slaughtered by its ability.

【Mortal Ghost】
HP: 332
It’s a floating ghost that became a monster after inhaling noxious gas.
It prefers to haunt places with a feeling of loss.
You have to deal with its large array of magic spells and high endurance.
Inexperienced adventurers will not be able to subjugate one.

Full Text Arc 3

Here's arc 3 and 4 for you to read. We combined them since arc 3 was rather short.

Chapter 17 – Beginner Crusher Grundom

"Leave all of your equipment and belongings, and perhaps I'll spare your life."

A big guy who had to be at least 3 meters tall pinned down a party of C rank adventurers with only his fist.
The young sword fighter's skills wasn't much use, his party members were already at death's door.
The magician's spells weren't effective against the guy either.
The lives of the sword fighter's comrades were on the line, so the equipment was surrendered to the guy.

"Just be obedient and I'll make it as painless as possible…Come on, hurry it up."

The large guy violently threw the items and food on the ground.
The recovery items fell on the ground and the contents were spilled.

"There aren't any women in your party, I was looking forward to having a little fun with one.
All the members in your party are guys,
are you homo? Bring along a woman."

Being falsely accused like that, the young man stayed silent.
Even though the young man was an experienced fighter, nothing seemed to work on the guy.
For the first time since he was born, the young man met an overwhelming opponent and had no willpower to resist.

"Well, I already got what I need, here you go. Catch."

The large guy threw the bag up in the sky, hitting the face of the young man as it came down.
The young man didn't pick it up, he just stayed silent and looked down.

"You, stop being an adventurer. It's good that I'm being merciful, but if I was a monster you wouldn't have survived. They're merciless. How long have you been C rank?"

"……..half a year."

"Wwhaaa, half a year!"

The large guy was was more surprised than he should have been, and was holding his stomach while laughing out loud.

"Y-you don't have any talent at all! From D rank it takes half a month to rank up, right?

What kind of stupid things were you taking for quests, monster materials or crap? You're stupid, but you're suitable for odd jobs. You raised to C rank doing that, and have been there for half a year. Aren't you such an idiot. Hyahahahahahahahahah! kuku! hahahahahahaha!"

And again, the large guy laughed out loud.
The young man's frustration didn't spill out, he was desperately holding it all in.

"You don't have any talent. By the way, is that guy dead?"

After saying that the young man worked hard treating them.
Looking at the situation, the large guy was giggling and laughing.

/ / /

"Ryua-chan, are you done?"

"A-a little bit more!"

We have been inside the weapon shop for a while, I had trouble choosing this or that for 20 minutes.
I have 200 gold with me.
One is an iron sword which is 180 gold.
The other is a wing sword which is 150 gold.
The iron sword's sharpness is higher.
On the other hand, the wing sword can be swung faster.
If I pay 180 gold, the 20 gold left will all be spent on lunch.
The pocket money I have totals only 200 gold.
Roel is in charge of the money from the quests, but not the everyday living allowance.
I've been saving up till I had 200 gold.
The iron sword is sharper, in some cases that may decide a win or loss.
The wing sword is faster, I may be able to quickly save someone in a dire situation.
Which one should I buy…
I've been reaching out my hand for the item and then drawing back repeatedly.
The old guy at the counter was waiting with an expression that seemed to say "If you are going to buy do it quickly".

"Hey, Ryua-chan, I'm sure you had a sword right? Isn't it fine to not buy anything?"

"T-that sword has some kind of dangerous effect. Because it would be dangerous if Roel got caught up in it, I'd like to avoid using it as much as possible. That's why I'm looking into getting a normal sword for fighting."

That flash of annihilation. The explosion that swallowed up the <King of Destruction>. Its power is quite a menace to me.
I would look like an idiot if I accidentally invoked the weapon's effect and got caught up in the explosion, so I really need to make up my mind and decide.

"Ryua-chan, you're already strong to start with, isn't it fine regardless which you choose?"

“That’s not the problem you know…”

Roel doesn’t understand my plight. Whether good or bad, it’s just that one problem.
Even if I buy the iron sword, its power might not be as strong as I’m imagining. Same for the wing sword, its speed might not actually be that fast. My worrying won’t end.
I want to try testing them, but if I don’t test it in an actual battle then it’s useless.

“Hey, how about buying both.”

“No.”

It was an immediate reply. Roel is terribly strict towards money.
I wonder if it’s her methodical personality, she is really precise when she manages the household finances book.

“Mean…”

I showed Roel a crestfallen look , but it wasn’t effective.
I wasn’t able to trick her with my act.

“If you can deal with my quest then I can get you better weapons, just so you know.”

Unable to let things continue as they were, the old owner of the weapon shop suddenly suggested something.
If I take it, I can get a better weapon.
No matter what I have to do, I’m ready.

“As a matter of fact——-”

Just as the old guy was about to say something, the weapon shop’s door was quietly opened.
Putting the explanation on hold, the old guy said “Welcome” but that person said nothing and walked towards us.

“How much would all of these weapons go for? It’s fine no matter how much you buy them for.”

“Wouldn’t you be in trouble if you sell all these? You, are you that sword fighter?”

“It’s fine, I don’t need them anymore.”

sigh “Then…”

Without getting a proper explanation about the situation, the old guy started to trade.

“Ok, this is all.”

“Thank you”

After receiving the money, the man went outside quietly.
His figure from behind was hunched over and had no reliability to it at all, it was as if he would collapse at any time.

“That guy is probably feeling guilty. Failing a quest…every adventurer will experience that. We failed one in the past as well, Geneki was feeling pretty down at that time.”
*(TL:*オレも昔、現役だった頃はヘコんだもんさ*)*

“Geneki? Old man, you used to be an adventurer?

“Aah, how nostalgic…in those days there wasn’t anyone that didn’t know the name of Kozow.”

Kozow, the weapon shop owner, started to get earnestly immersed in remembering.
His hair is now mostly gone and his stomach is big, right now there isn’t even a shadow of his past.
(TL: 頭の 毛 は薄く なり 、下っ腹 はぽっこりと 出 ていて 今では その影 もない 。*)*

“Being an adventurer is like living in a dream. Once you become A ranked, depending on the quest you can handle, you can receive tens of thousands of gold. But of course there are setbacks and you have to deal with a lot things.”

“T-ten thousand…”

All I have is 200 gold, I wonder how small this is compared to that.
A rank…money is not why I want to become one but I’m getting more and more excited at the thought of becoming one.

“Oops, before i forget. About the matter earlier, if you want to know more I think the guild has the quest documents. Try looking for the name Kozow.”

In the end, Roel reached the limit of her patience and left the store buying the iron sword.
I thought that she was a docile person, but she has an unexpectedly strong personality at times like this.
I ended up finding a new side of Roel again.

/ / /

We went to the guild and the person we saw earlier at the weapon shop was here.
He was sitting at the counter facing Rintei who had a scrupulous expression.

“Are you really sure about this?”

“Mm, I don’t have any regrets.”

“In which case, I will do the legal process for deleting your adventurer registration. Once deleted, if you want to be an adventurer again you’ll have to start over at D rank. Well then, I will start the paperwork.”

Deleting the registration, is that person quitting being an adventurer?
I wonder if he went through something heart-breaking…I don't know if he did but if you look closely at he was clenching his teeth.
You can easily see his distress.

"I have nothing much to say, but you are safe so you don't need to get yourself too worked up. Beginner Crusher Grundom…we put out a quest for his extermination but there hasn't been any progress related to it, even now. Some C ranking people took it but they ended up coming back pretty beaten up. This town doesn't have many B rank adventurers to start with, and the ones we had left to do other quests. And Gantetsu-san has returned to the Avangard Kingdom castle town…However, if a B rank adventurer takes it they will immediately take him down. If that happens, someone like Grundom will not be here anymore. You're still young, so please don't give up yet."

"What do you know? If you have the spare time to meddle unnecessarily you should use that time to start the legal procedure."

The man looked like who was about to cry spat out those words.
I wonder if he experienced something really mortifying? He was clenching his hand into a fist and was trembling.
Beginner Crusher Grundom, I wonder what that person did to this man.

"Who's Beginner Crusher Grundom?"
"They say that he ambushes beginner adventurers when they go to dungeons."

I didn't know someone like that was here.
From the way Roel spoke, it seems that she doesn't know much about it either.

"Ok, the procedure is done."

The man who wasn't an adventurer anymore went out without saying anything.

"I feel bad for that person. If I hadn't met Ryua-chan…"

From the way it looks, it seems he's getting more depressed as time goes on.
He's like that because of Grundom.
I'm interested in taking the quest for his extermination, but I should do the quest for Kozow-san before that.
Together with Roel we searched for his quest.
Thanks to her teaching me the how to read letters, I can read a little bit of them. I still have a long way to go before I can read properly though.
Therefore, I'll leave it to Roel.

"There it is, this is it, right?"

[I want you to mine me some iron at the 4th floor of Avangard Cave.]
[Client: Weapon Shop IronMan Shopkeeper, Kozow]

“It’s the <Avangard Cave> from Pablo’s quest we did before, right?”

“That’s right, we went as far as the 2nd floor but now it’s the 4th floor.”

We were persistently warned to not go any further than 2nd floor because strong monsters loiter there, so we didn’t.
But I wonder what’s actually down there.
It seem the quest is for C ranks, I guess it’ll be fine.

“So to confirm, the quest from Kozow-san. And this time Ryua-san and Roel-san will take it. Right. I understand.”

It seems the way Rintei is talking right now is the usual way of talking to someone who is taking a quest.
It was written that we are going “to mine” but I actually don’t know what I have to do.
First of all, let’s go back to the weapon shop and hear the details for the quest.

/ / /

“That’s right, then here you go.”

Kozow gave us a mining set.
The danger level for the 2nd floor of Avangarde Cave is about 3, it seem at the lowest floor, the 5th floor, the danger level is generally about 8-10.
I wonder if that cobra came from the 3rd floor.
The monsters on the 2nd floor weren’t that big of a deal, and Roel’s level raised so I’m not that worried.

“On the 3rd floor there is a monster that can poison you, so be careful”

Following Kozow’s advice we prepared many antidotes to counter it.
Something like poison won’t affect me, and for Roel who is behind me I absolutely won’t let them touch her.
Right from the start I thought that we didn’t need any, but it’s better to have it and not need it than to need it and not have it.

“Well then, have a safe trip.”

“Yeah, take care.”

/ / /

Someone was looking at the town’s entrance from far away.
Two adventurers had just left Kwimill.
When the giant noticed that both of them were girls, his mouth warped into a grin.

“Oooh, it’s been a long time since a woman left town. I smell like piss…Oh well, that’s fine, so it’s time to play!”

The giant hiding in the woods stood up.
He would stand out too much in the plains, so it wasn't a good place to hide.
Grundom was merely lurking in the woods and silently observing the town's entrance.
There are a lot of beginner adventurers at Kwimill, so it was an ideal hunting ground for him.
Of course, he would stay hidden if the adventurers seemed skilled.
He plays it safe since he doesn't know how good they are.
Grundom looks for beginners because they're easy targets.
Really, just for this reason.

"From the packs those two are carrying, they're probably going to mine at the 4th floor of Avangard Cave. I'll be going ahead to ambush them, so I should take the shortcut. Kukukukukuku!"

Even though he a brawny type that was good for hunting, he also had quite the brain. He started planning his ambush…

Chapter 18 – Beginner Crusher Grundom 2

"Tei!"

A *Bonk* resounded as the <Cave Rabbit> was defeated.
Roel was able to hit and fatally injure a <Cave Rabbit>.
The first time I saw her do it was at level 2, so its natural she can do it now, but she seems more resolved. It's obviously different from before.
Compared to that dreadful ghost mansion, I wonder if it's because the is cute.
I think I get it.

"So, the 2nd floor isn't that scary anymore!"

We went onwards as Roel said that, as if celebrating something.
She was pretty happy. Behind me, I almost didn't notice a bat flying towards us.
I slapped it with my palm and watched it vanish, and I regained my attentive composure.
*(TL:*それ をボク が平手 で 叩い て 消し飛ば した のを見 て、ようやく 我 に返った。*)*

"Just like a bug…….Ryua-chan, you really are strong."

"Using my hand is easier since it's quite troublesome to keep drawing my sword……"

Returning to the room where Pablo had wanted us to get the spring water from, there was a small room just beyond it which lead down to the next floor.
And thus, we arrived at the 3rd floor.
If I remember correctly the quest's goods should be on the 4th floor.
It feels somewhat dusky here.
This time we're doing some mining for ore. It's probably because of people going in and out frequently, but there were lights on the walls which was a relief.

I was worried that the monsters here were going to be bothersome to beat.
Compared to the 2nd floor, the passageway here is very spacious so it would be easy to fight with monsters here.
Like on the 2nd floor, there were treasure boxes…but the items inside didn't change much.

"We just need to follow the light, this seems pretty straightforward."

"Yeah, but according to Kozow-san there are monsters that can poison us here, right…?"

【Killer Tail x3 appeared! HP:53】
A scorpion-like monster with a height up to about my waist appeared from inside the cave.
They pointed its tail at us, there seems to be a poisonous needle on the tail.
For 3 of these things to suddenly appear.
The lower floors sure are more severe.
And on top of its quick appearance, it has a long reach.
The scorpion didn't move from its spot, instead it extended its tail to stab me.
I drew my sword and bent down to evade, from there I swung my sword in an arc.
The tail was cleanly cut and fell on the ground.
Without any delay I bisected all of them.

【Ryua attacked! Killer Tail received 382991 damage!】
【Killer Tail was defeated HP 0/53】

Just as I thought, using the sword is better.
The sharpness of the iron sword is good…but the wing sword may have been faster to swing.
It's too late to worry about that, but when this quest is done Kozow said that I can get a better weapon.
I need to work hard.

"Amazing, amazing! If it was me I couldn't have dodged it."

Roel clapped.
The truth is I didn't need to dodge, but I really didn't like the needle so I ended up dodging.

"Just as I thought, we won't be needing the antidotes."

I thoroughly looked inside Roel's tool bag.
I thought antidotes would be good for an emergency, but I can probably handle hundreds of thousands of those <Killer Tail> monsters.
(TL: 万が一の備えと思っていたけどこれじゃ万どころか億だ)
After all, the danger level is just 10.

Advancing on, the passageways are so vast that there isn't really any forked pathways.
We arrived on the 4th floor without any difficulties. When we reached that place I sensed a strange presence.

"I wonder who's here?"

“Eh, there was an adventurer that went in before us?”

“I think it’s different than an adventurer.”

“D-different? Then who…?”

All I felt was a leaking bloodthirst. It’s different from the way a monsters does it.
No mistake, it was a human for sure.
I don’t what that person is planning, but if you are coming for us then I will stand against you.

【Killer Tail appeared! HP:53】
【Transforming Frog appeared! HP:65】

I was worried about the bloodthirst, so I didn’t spare any time worrying about those monsters. I just slashed them as I passed by.

On the way there was a treasure box, but it was already opened.
If I had to guess who took the treasure, it would be the person releasing the bloodthirst.
I pretended not to notice as we arrived at the mining location.
Using the mining set, we immediately started to work.

Behind us we heard a thundering roar and footsteps.
Thud with that heavy sound it stood before us.
Looking around, we were in a dead end of the mining spot. We were driven into a corner to confront the monster.

【Behemoth of Catastrophe appeared! HP:815】

It was a monster with a unique appearance. It had the body of a rhinoceros the head of an elephant.
To us this passageway felt wide, but to this monster it would be cramped.

“Floor monster…!”

Roel was speechless.
It was something Gantetsu taught us before while he was drunk: Floor Monster.
I don’t how strong this guy is, and from the start adventurers just end up being this guy’s prey.
I probably should’ve asked Gantetsu about this monster.
It’s certainly strong, but this monster seems very similar to something I fought on the 2nd floor of the <Caves of Hell>, they almost have the same appearance.
I’m worried this guy might suddenly start rampaging, I should quickly dispose of it before that happens.

As I thought that, it keeled over raising a thundering roar as fell down.
It didn’t twitch nor move, and behind the monster there was a big guy.
The big guy smiled as he waved his hand that defeated the monster.

“You girls, you’re saved”

I wouldn’t be as tall as this man even if I doubled my height, while thinking that the big guy approached us.
A smooth, shining head and thin moustache, the muscles of his body looks like they belonged on a monster.

“What are two girls like you doing this far in the dungeon? That was a pretty dangerous situation wasn’t it? From the 2nd floor onwards, adventurers who are over-confident in their skills challenge this guy and end up dying. Floor monsters are incomparably strong, don’t you agree?”

“Um, thank you very much for saving us.”

Roel lightly bowed and the big guy patted our heads.
He moved his hands down and touched our shoulders.

“Then, leave all of your stuff here. Compared to your lives, it’s cheap right?”

As I thought, it’s like that.
I understood immediately from his excessively confident expression and pressuring gentleness.

“T-hat is…wait a minute…”

“Wait a what now? Impossible, you don’t have anything to pay me back for saving you? Hmmm?”

“Is there any other way…?”

“Then, XXXX with this old man.”

“Eh, ah, what? What is that?”

There was a question mark floating above our heads. I haven’t heard of whatever he was suggesting, but at the same time I also don’t know anything about stuff like that.
Anyhow, I think this guy’s purpose was this from the start, I really don’t have to hold back.
I seized the hand on my left shoulder.

“Oooh? Something wrong?”
(TL:「お、お？　なんだなんだ？*)*」

My right hand looked like it belonged on a child compared to his hand, and the big guy just narrowed his mouth while watching me.
Then I exerted a little strength onto his wrist.

“O-oooowwwwwwwwwwwww!! A-a-agyaaaaaaaaaaah!!”

The guy was on his knees screaming, he was desperately trying to remove my hand.

I just let go of his hand and he unsteadily moved backwards.

“W-w-what was that?”

“What was what?” is what I want to reply. He was probably confused.

“For a kid to something like that to me, Grundom-sama?”

fuuu-fuuu he was blowing the hand that I seized earlier while looking my way.
Grundom, so this is the guy.
He was a good for nothing person, more so than I expected.

“So you are the <Beginner Crusher> Grundom. Why are you doing this?”

“Ho ho, so I’m not just a rumor anymore.”

“The guild person said that when the B class adventurers return they would immediately subjugate you.”

I glared at him who was staring at Roel with dirty eyes.
His sweat slowly stopped forming, and finally the the pain on his hand started to recede. Grundom released his hand.

“Ku ku, like I care!”

While saying that he simultaneously headed towards Roel.
He dashed at her, ignoring the fact that the cave floor was dangerous and protruding rocks littered the area.
(TL: 突起 などで 歩き にくい 洞窟 の 地面 など 物ともしない 慣れた 動き でダッシュし てくる。)
He planned to strike Roel with his log-like arm, but he was too slow.
I sighed and then jumped between him and Roel, stopping his arm with one hand.

“Ugh!”

He just doesn’t learn, huh? Forgetting what happened before, the hand he was so proud of was injured again.
Grundom was suffering as if he hit an iron pole.

“Once again, let’s hear it. Why are you doing this?”

“M-mind your own business!”

After all this happened, I’m not composed anymore and he was starting to get angry.
He was breathing heavily and was clenching his teeth.
Grundom once again tried to make a fist.
He attempted to do a flurry of straight punches with both of his fists, though this time he ignored Roel and went for me.
Left, right, back. I elegantly evaded them.

I evade to the left and his arm hits the air.
The wind from his punches made my hair slightly sway.
No matter how many times he swung at me, he wasn't even able to graze me. His face flushed like an octopus after he was done.

"Haaa, haaa haaa……..w-what the heck are you……."

"I won't lose to someone like you."

"Just what the heck are you!?"

He was barking words at me and simultaneously came at me with his whole body.
His punches won't work on me, let alone a tackle.
I stopped him with my right hand.
It was like he was running towards an invisible wall and hit it but his feet just kept going.
Being stopped, his body wasn't moving at all but his feet were still moving like an engine.

"OOAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!"

He did an angry roar like a beast, threatening me.
It was quite the ugly display. Without realizing his defeat or admitting he lost, he was desperately shouting.

"Bastard! Just what are you! Why is someone like you here in this shitty dungeon! Are you an A rank?!"

"Just recently I became C rank, you know."

"Don't lie to me!!"

"It wasn't a lie. Here, look."

I showed my Adventurer Card to Grundom.
What he saw written there was the truth, up until now he was angry but right now he was quiet.

"It's a lie……."

Grundom dropped his arms down in astonishment.
Roel was continuously holding on her staff.
I was dumbfounded by all of this, and furthermore he continued to show denial.

"No matter how many times I have to ask, I will. Why are you doing this?"

"J-just leave me alone!"

He was out of breath and was exhaling and inhaling raggedly while he continued to be stubborn.
Then he thought of an idea, he suddenly brandished the hands he had lowered before.

It's probably his trump card. It was just like my <Sonic Ripper>, tearing up the air while being terribly fast as it flew towards me.
I drew my sword and released a light <Sonic Ripper>.
Contact. Slowly, slowly, the force of both attacks were dispersed.
In the end, my attack negated his attack.
Though there was still some power left from my attack as it hit Grundom, and blood was gushing out.

"Gaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!"

Grundom collapsed onto the ground.

"Aha oops……"

Hearing the really painful groan Grundom was making, Roel rushed over.
Roel used <Heal> on him.
I wonder if the pain lessened, Grundom opened his mouth.

"U…ugh…ouch"

"…does it still hurt?"

"Ow…it hurts…"

"Please don't do something like this again."

"Damn it…damn it!"

After being healed, he was scornfully glaring at Roel.
Then tears came out from his eyes. For such a big adult to cry with some mucus coming out of his nose…
He was mad until now, but he was like a different person while crying.

"I……as I thought this is just my limit!"

"You should've listened to what Ryua-chan was saying earlier. Why are you doing such things?"

"I hated it you know…the difference in ranks. We started at the same time and yet that guy became an A rank. We both did the quests, and that guy ranked up to A. In the end I was completely left behind. As time passed, one by one those guys raised from C to B and I was completely passed over…I thought I had reached my limit. I failed the A rank examination and became eternally a B rank, wandering aimlessly. I cannot beat an A rank monster like those guys, and even the lower ranked guys eventually passed me. It was mortifying…I was miserable…and after some thinking, I started crushing beginners. Those guys were filled with hope, those beginners will achieve great things…I'm jealous of them."

It was as if I had cold water poured one me, listening to what Grundom talked about.

(TL: 決壊して流れ込んできた水のようにグルンドムは語る。*)*
I don't understand what Grundom felt, but I still scolded him.

"Even I was weak from the start. Even so, I didn't give up and made it this far. Even that old senile guy didn't stop me."
*(TL:*おじさんみたいに八つ当たりもしなかった」*)*

"…do you know about the Level Cap?"

"Level Cap?"

It was the first time I heard anything about that.

Chapter 19 – Beginner Crusher Grundom End

"Level Cap……..?"

Roel also doesn't know about it.

"When you return to the guild after finishing the quest, normally you measure your level. 'I'll never stop enjoying this moment'…I was also like that. But, what if one day your level stopped changing? One day it will come and no matter how many days you continue to fight after that, it won't change…that's when you've reached your level cap. Each person has a different level limit."

"Level……..limit"

I unintentionally murmured.
Each person has a different maximum limit.
I never considered that.
I don't know what my level is, however since I've made it this far I believed that anyone can become stronger as long as they keep working hard.

"My level continued to stay at Level 24…"

"B-but don't give up, continue fighting! Try to measure it again…"

"Metalika country"

Suddenly Grundom said the name of that country, I've heard about it from Roel before.

"Apparently they a have a machine that can measure your Level Cap. I couldn't take it anymore so I headed towards the country of Metalika. It was such an amazing country… there was an iron bracelet that shows your current level. It can also measure the level of other people…"

“Such a thing exists…”

I wanted to find out more, but what we’re talking about right now really isn’t useful nor what I originally wanted to hear. I don’t think he’s lying…I still have a lot to learn about this world and everything in it.

“You, whats your level?”

“I don’t know, no matter how many times I entered the iron box at the guild <OverFlow> comes out…”

“O-overflow you say…”

Grundom was making something like a sour face and shut his mouth.
No matter how many times I tried to measure my level each Iron Box did the same thing, so I eventually just stopped trying.
It never looked like it was actually broken, and if that’s the case my level…

“So your level is over 100. I can’t believe it…”

“Over level 100? Me?”

“It can’t be helped that Kwimill is in the sticks…however to reach a level over 100…such thing is already S rank, is what those guys said…”

I sort of expected this, my level being over 100.
Roel and the others are able to measure their level, whereas I’m never able to.
My Level is more than 100, so I wonder what my real level is.
I want to know…

“My wounds are mostly healed…thank you, miss.”

“Are you able to move right now?”

Roel quickly moved away from Grundom.
From what I see, it’s pretty obvious she doesn’t like him.

“You don’t have to worry, it’s fine, no matter what I do now. I…”

I deflected a knife that was flying at Grundom’s neck.
The knife rotated in the air and stuck into the cave wall.

“Hey…”

Being targeted by the knife, Grundom realized that his life was in jeopardy.

“Uhiiiiiii~…seriously?”

He lifted his pink glasses and pointed a finger towards me. He was a tall guy with slicked

back hair that turned spiky on the back of his head and he was wearing a very pink outfit. His sense of fashion hurt the eyes.

"You, rank D right? Seriously?"

He was confused while he was bending his waist back and forth.

"Y-you are…!"

"You went too far, Grundom-chan. Because it was so~ troubling to the village I went and accepted the subjugation quest, you see?"

"Why is an A rank like you in such a remote region?!"

A rank, is this guy is an adventurer?
This person came here on the subjugation quest for Grundom.
But I wonder if this Subjugation quest is to kill the person.
If it was a monster I would understand, but I won't kill a person.
The people in my village were killed by monster…those burning memories, those scenes come into my mind.
Skewered, killed, burned…life was stolen that day.
That tragedy is something I won't forget as long as I live. Will I…even be able to kill someone?

"I came here for something completely~ unrelated. Actually, Gantetsu should've also stopped by here for the same reason."

Gantetsu came here for the same reason as this fellow?
He didn't come here to subjugate the <Poison Salamander>, that much I understand.

"Nnnn, I wanted~ to do this quickly but I didn't expect for such a cute [girl] to block my attack."

He was moving his hips left and right while pointing his finger at me.

"Why are you going to kill this person?"

I finally got a grip on myself just as Roel opened her mouth.

"It's a subjugation quest, sweetie. Isn't normal to take his head? You girls are D rank? C rank? I really dunno what the normal rank is for this town."

"But killing a person…why…"

"Aaaa~ well, if there is a human resisting and being naughty then it's a subjugation quest. Capturing them is okay, but depending on the person and the quest it depends. Well whatever, I won't be capturing him~."

Kuku the person was laughing his head off, and suddenly he tried to go for the kill again.

It was the same thing that I deflected earlier, a knife with a short blade that he threw.
I deflected it exactly like before.

"Ooo~ooooo~oooo~? For such a low ranking [girl] like you? To me?"

"Stop it, even you won't win against that guy…"

When Grundom said that I did a 'Thumbs up' pose.
The guy's brows began to wrinkle, I saw a really amusing face.

"Can I consider this to be you hindering my subjugation?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"He isn't resisting anymore so there's no need to kill him."

"So just because he isn't resisting I'm not allowed to kill him~?"

He was laughing at me as if I was an idiot.

"If that's how you think, you'll definitely die someday."

After saying that he vanished from sight.
I wonder if he was under the impression that I couldn't win, I don't know if he was trying to convince me but for now the fight ended.

"Wa-haaaaaaaaaa, what was with that person?!"

With her patience exhausted, Roel took a deep breath and told him off.

"That guy is Xinbu, a superior A ranking adventurer. His class is Assassin. As you saw, that guy likes to mess around. He easily passed by me and became A ranked."

"Superior A rank……"

That person seemed to be indifferent to killing others.
Regardless of whether I become A ranked or not…I don't want to end up like him.

"I would have surrendered the moment he asked…for me to lose to a kid even using my full strength, I can't go on anymore. I'm so ashamed…"

After mining the items for the quest, we left the cave together with Grundom.
I kept and eye on him as we walked just in case he did something odd.
But Grundom was quiet from start to finish.
From what I see from his back, he had long since passed the age where he could dream optimistically. He was…a lonely adult.

/ / /

In front of a station soldier, Grundom stated his name, crime, and everything he did.
The soldiers looked at us and Grundom, they couldn't believe it at the beginning.

"It seems Grundom has been caught."

"I saw him being escorted to the Kingdom Castle town. The people who caught him were C rank adventurers…both of them were girls."

Inside the guild, rumors spread like wildfire. Adventurers all over the building were sneaking glances at us.

"Really, you guys caught him? Isn't that amazing!"

"No, you're probably just mistaken…"

We lied to people that came up to us. The murmurs floating around were laced with trash talk and jealousy.
Last time something like this happened, they didn't believe that I took down the <Poison Salamander>. But unlike before I was recognized a little bit which felt pretty good.
If I had done this quest earlier, maybe that guy wouldn't have quit being an Adventurer.
I can't stop thinking about it, but I understand.
I remember the the appearance of that guy being depressed, and Grundom who obediently surrendered while not being forgiven.

We gave the ore to Kozow, he was glad that we were safe.
The reward was precisely 1000G, and we also got the reward for subjugating Grundom.
Roel was jumping for joy about our finances since we received a lot of money.
Suddenly I thought 'If that's the case, I want my pocket money to be increased!'.

"That's right, I promised you something. This is the best weapon and the most expensive one in the shop. Here you go, the Mithril Sword."

It's lighter than the iron sword, and much sharper. I see, it's like a mix of the Iron and Wing swords.

"Thank you, Kozow-san. This is a really amazing sword!"

"HAHAHA! Isn't it? After all it's a mithril-made weapon. It's a very precious weapon, but thinking of it as a gift and leaving it in your hands is a small price to pay for it to be used by someone so amazing."

"Good for you, Ryua-chan!"

"I also have a present for you."

Kozow walked out from the back of his shop carrying a staff.

On the tip there was a mark drawn like a red flame.

“<Fire Rod>. It’s a staff that allows you to use flame magic.
It’s popular with priests like you who can’t use any magic attacks.
However, the strength depends on how much magical power you use on it.”

“I-Is it fine for me to accept something so valuable?”

“I didn’t really think about it, but you two were attacked not only by the floor monster but also Grundom. It was supposed to be an easy quest for you guys, with little danger involved. Setting Grundom aside, running into the floor monster was just completely unexpected.”

It seems Kozow was in a very generous and jolly mood.
He was initially surprised when we said that we had captured Grundom, but he immediately believed what we said and praised us.

“But please don’t be reckless. In the future, if you think things are getting too dangerous make sure you escape. No matter what you are there to do, your life is much more important.”

“Yes. Thank you, we will keep your advice in mind.”

After leaving the generously kind Kozow’s shop, we went to buy food for dinner.
The sun started to set not long after.
In the blink of an eye the day ended, and as I watched the sun I recalled my hardships.
Without knowing, I spent 10 years of my life in the <Caves of Hell>.
All I did was fight continuously day after day.
During that time I never thought about anything else. But comparing then to now, I would never go back to those kinds of days.
Especially since I have Roel with me.
Little by little it seems that her existence became irreplaceable to me.

“Yes? What is it?”

“I-It’s nothing.”

Without realizing, I had been looking at Roel.
I suddenly got embarrassed and turned my face away.

“Hey, I want to try and go to the Wizard Kingdom and Metalika someday, and possibly the Avangard Kingdom Castle town from before.”

“Yeah, someday let’s go. Together.”

Together…I thought a little about what that meant.
I wonder, if Grundom had a comrade with him would things have been a little different?
Walking together, helping the other when they’re weak…in the end the adventurer he once was is now nothing but a shadow of the past.

(TL: 共に歩めず、劣等感がつのり、最後には道を踏み外した冒険者の成れの果て。*)*
Just what is my level cap?
If my level stopped rising and Roel surpassed me…
Would she wait for me?
Would we still walk together?
Would I end up like Grundom?

"What? Just a while ago you were doing the same thing."

I hadn't realized I was once again staring at Roel.

"Hey, Roel…we will be together forever, right?"

"What are you on about? Of course we will."

"I'm glad…"

From the bottom of my heart I was relieved.
I want things to stay like this for a long as possible, even eternity.
Just like how the setting sun continued to burn without ever changing since the world was created.
Finally, the menu for dinner that I was starting to think about arrived.

Chapter 20 – The Circumstances of the 3 Sisters Part 1

[There are a lot of <Wild Squirrels> wolfing down our Poporu fruits so I want them to be exterminated. There's a vast amount of them so I'll need a lot of Adventurers to deal with this.]
[Koiwa Plantation]
(TL: アライリス*)*
The Poporu fruit. An exterior that looked like a peach with an interior giving off a sweet smell. A soft fruit, with a faintly sweet flavor reminiscent of a carbonated drink. This is what the Koiwa Plantation was growing.
The plantation at a glance was spacious; so much so that I couldn't tell how large this place actually was.
There really isn't a way for one person to cover this much ground.
Due to this, there are a lot of adventurers other than us working together to exterminate the monster called <Wild Squirrel>.

【Wild Squirrel x4 appeared!　HP:24】

【Ryua attacked! Damage Average:50119! Wild Squirrel x4 was defeated!　HP:0/24】

The monster itself is not a big deal.
Even the <Cave Rabbit> may be stronger than this, but these might be a bit difficult on adventurers who just started holding a sword.
The problem is in their numbers, just looking around the area there was over 30 of them.

It seems that their breeding ability is high so if you just leave them they will quickly multiply.
At first I was in high spirits and was hunting seriously but the remaining number is just too high, I'm tired of hunting them already.
Now that I think about it, this quest is for C ranks so the difficulty should be a bit higher than what we're used to.
I wonder why we ended up taking this quest…

"The plantation's production is suffering so the market price of this fruit is rising really high~!"

That's right, it was Roel.
Clearly her participation was influenced by her gluttony.
Besides the Poporu fruit we had also been shopping for strawberries and apples since they were her favorites. Her eyes sparkled whenever she saw those fruits.
The allure of fruit charmed me so I decided to participate even though the monster count was troublesome.
Of course, I could instantly take care of all the <Wild Squirrel>s.
If I used magic they would be wiped out. But the plantation would be obliterated as well. That idea was rejected.
Even though the easy way was rejected, I'm still serious about exterminating every one of them even if means running around the entire plantation.
(TL: しかし 、それ で なくても ボク が本気で 農園 を 駆け回れ ば そう 時間 はかから ない。*)*

"Ryua-chan, make sure not to defeat them all! There are beginner adventurers here too you know."

If she hadn't said that then I probably wouldn't have noticed.
For the beginners this is the perfect chance to level up. They won't just let someone steal their prey before their eyes.
Seems like I'll have to continue but hunt them slowly.

"Hii~!"

Inexperienced adventurers were carelessly surrounded and raised hysteric shouts.
'I'm not going to just let that happen!' I thought as I saved them.
Those squirrels were completely erased without a trace remaining. Brandishing my new sword, the adventurers were dumbfounded for a while but eventually said their thanks.

"Are you by chance Ryua-san? Waaah, she's smaller than I thought!"

I resumed my hunting pace when a party of 3 girls came to talk to me.
I wonder how they know my name?

"The rumors said that it was a girl that caught Grundom, it was nice to hear. Even though we are both girls, there's an amazing difference between us. We decided to work harder."

I see, it seems that the case of Grundom had spread more than I thought.
I wonder… it seems this D rank party of girls was looking at me as if I was a star of hope.

(TL: Dランクのこの女の子パーティには希望の星に見えたのだろう。*)*
These girls are still beginners at this.
Saying that, I'm still a C rank so I wonder if its fine to be pleased about receiving praise…it's not a bad feeling though.

Before I had realized it, the number of the squirrels had declined to near zero.
Everything was completed by the afternoon.
The head of of the Koiwa plantation was earnestly wiping of the sweat from his face with the towel while thanking us a lot of times.

"No, everyone we are truly thankful! It's thanks to you people that the crops weren't completely destroyed!"

All the staff of the plantation bowed their heads.

"So then, it's fine to take as much fruits as we want right?!"

The voice with no discretion belonged to Aude.
So this guy also participated…it would have been good if I had mistaken him as a squirrel. I might have killed him.
That dark thought instantly passed through my head.

"It's fine, it's fine, but of course there will be a limit to it. The only exception is that you absolutely must not take the fruits designated to be shipped for business."

Gulp

There were someone who swallowed their saliva.
…one of them was Roel.

Compared to during the hunt, the scenery right now is peaceful.
The adventurers had been swinging their swords in a frenzy to kill the squirrels, and now they're going nuts gathering fruits.
Before long, a questionable amount of fruit from the plantation had been eaten to the point of near exhaustion. I was curious about how Roel was eating them.

"Ryua-chan, aren't you going to eat?"

"Roel, first off you should really be eating the fruit with your right hand since it'd be easier to gather with your left."
(TL:「ロエルはまず右手に持っているぶどうを食べてから手を出したほうがいいよ」*)*

Even though I have already eaten plenty of it, this girl is still eating.

"Yo! Looks like you guys are doing fine!"

A noisy person came to talk to us.
Aude was swinging his basket of fruits with one hand and making a rude entrance while

approaching us.

"Well, I have also been working hard you know. I'm finally level 7. If I remember right you are at level 6, right? Well, work at it! Being a hard worker is the best way to achieve things."

"Yes, we will work hard."

Was she being honest or was she trying to deal with him? I don't know what Roel was trying to accomplish.
We had been passing the time nicely up until now, though normally you wouldn't think someone would stay here this late…I wonder what this guy is going to start yapping about?
When we had finished the ore mining quest she had leveled once again to 10.

"Ah, I wanted to see you! Ryua-san!"

The group of 3 girls from earlier found us.
They were carrying one basket of fruit.

"About the Grundom extermination, is it fine to ask about what happened?"

"Eh, it's fine, the subjugation or the ore excavation…"

"Should I tell you about my astonishing episodes? The 'Injured Person Rescuer' volume!"

"No need."

Aude received a cold reply.

"Roel and I are still only at C rank ourselves, is there really any difference between us?"

"There is a difference! We're still only D rank and at level 2. The whole time we were at <Avangard Cave>'s 2nd floor was really dangerous for us. When we were attacked by a group of bats we ended up using all of our recovery items…it was a boon for us when Ryua-san's party dealt with Grundom. If he was still there and found us…I wonder that we would have done…"

"I thought about giving up, but I really wanted to hear all about the exciting adventures that your party has gone on!"

Each of the girls were opening their mouths and praising us.
The girl with proper manners is Ai, the cheerful and energetic one is Mai, and finally the small one who hasn't talked yet is Mi. It seems they are sisters.
Their classes respectively are: Axe Fighter, Archer, and Healer.
One by one they introduced themselves.
For such a slender girl to carry a heavy axe….she might be overdoing it.
Now that I think of that, I took a glance at them while hunting and noticed that they couldn't hit the nimble <Wild Squirrel>.
I wonder why they couldn't…? Perhaps I shouldn't think about it?

*(TL:*何か 理由 がある の か、それとも何 も考え ていないのか 。*)*

“Mi-chan, you’re a healer right? Same as me!”

Roel gave off an air of familiarity when she spoke, but Mi ended up hiding behind her older sister.
I wonder if that’s a shyness suitable for her age…

“Since you’re aiming to be A rank, you’ll eventually have to challenge the A rank ‘Status-Up’ examination, right?

“‘Status-Up’ examination?”

“To become an A rank you have to take the ‘Status-Up’ examination that is held once every year. You need to pass it on your first try since you don’t get a second chance to take it. There are B rank Adventures receiving permission from the Guild every year, it seems that no less than 500 adventurers are gathered there.”

I heard something like that before…
Whenever the topic of that examination comes up, ‘Gene Machine’ comes out.
I think it’s a quest that can only be handled when you become an A rank.

“Since we are still just C rank this talk is a little premature.”

“That’s right but…I don’t want to take a test. I wonder why they would do something like that.”

“You will be recognized as an A rank by the Guild located in the Kingdom. Just that in itself is important you know.”

Mai made a dispirited face when she was told about that.
I wonder if I could pass it even if I can’t really perform well in regards to reading or writing.

“The examination every year is…hmmmm, what is it?”

Mai’s hand was being tugged and pulled by Mi.
To hear what she was saying, Mai leaned over.

“Ah, look at the time…Ryua-san, Roel-san, we have some urgent business so we will be leaving immediately. Sorry.”

“That’s right, we don’t enough time to play…”

The 3 sisters left the plantation in a haste.
From the speed they took off at, I guess it’s really urgent business.
It was like the peaceful mood we had earlier was a lie.

“Weren’t they such a weird bunch?”

“Yeah, but I hope those girls will continue to work hard.”

Today we went home carrying only a single basket full of Poporu fruit.

///Gantetsu’s POV+3rd person POV///

“Fu~~…that was tiring.”

While walking in one of the long corridors of the castle, Gantetsu was feeling tired.
That mysterious monster subjugation.
It’s more ferocious than it looks, even I who had piled up a lot of experience was played with.
I wonder how many monsters like that exist…?
I shouldn’t say this, but I don’t want to fight it again.
If I wasn’t an A rank I wouldn’t have been sent out to hunt it.
I wonder if it’s fine to think something like that…
I had many dreams in the past of being an adventurer and choosing this path.
(TL: かつて は多くの 夢を見 て 冒険者 の 道 を選ん だはず 。*)*
Am I just a convenient tool for the Kingdom now?

“That monster, I wonder where the heck it came from.”

“It’s fine to not think about it, you know~”

Before Gantetsu had noticed, Xinbu was behind his back.
Reflexively Gantetsu turned around.

“Are you going to end your life as a normal human~? Gantetsu-san~”
(TL:「今 の で一回人生終 わったっしょ 。ガン テツさん 」*)*

“Stop joking around.”

“Temporarily stopping work as an A rank, such a thing is unforgivable Gantestu-san~, but the other day at Kwinmill you apparently did something~?”

“What are you trying to say?”

“It was a result born from a single person. It usually takes 5 people to something like that in this field. Despite that, what did you do? You did something like exterminating a <Poison Salamander> during your free time?”

“That was something urgent. I couldn’t just ignore it.”

Suddenly the distance between Gantestu and Xinbu shrunk, and Xinbu lightly grasped Gantestu’s chin to lift it.
It was as if Xinbu didn’t notice Gantestu glaring at him while he was stroking his chin.

“So…are you saying all that I need to do is show my true ability?”

The eyes inside the gaudy glasses shone followed by Gantetsu groaning.

"Then I'll go and finish 3 things~. How about yourself, how many will you do? Aren't you an A rank? Or is this your way of saying you're getting old~?"

"S-sorry…"

"You should already retire as a soldier~"

Just as Xinbu said, at Kwimill I wasn't able to produce many results.
But, it's true that I can't let the <Poison Salamander> incident slide.
Originally, I should've been an adventurer.
Yet my country is working me hard.
This Xinbu is a genius. In just one year after he started as an adventurer he passed the A rank 'Status-Up' examination, and just like that he joined the elites.
Since I was young, I steadily made up my way until I grew into this miserable state.
It's not only that, Xinbu also likes to say whatever he wants and I'm not able to refute it.
I don't want to feel inferior, but I know I can't win against that man.
My heart has long since admitted its defeat.

"There was that time I had to retrieve the head chief, he was an old man like yourself."
(TL:「あとの 一匹 はあの 顔 長兵 士長 が回収し たみ たいっしょ 。対し て ジジイ は」*)*

When Xinbu had finished talking, Gantetsu returned to walking.
Xinbu was looking at his back as he walked off.

"I'm such a miserable A rank…"

After Gantetsu walked far enough, the pink man let out his finger and then once again disappeared from the corridor.

Chapter 21 – The Circumstances of the 3 Sisters Part 2

We found ourselves at the <Strange Plains> where we had fought the <Poison Salamander>.
We came here after accepting a quest from the Tool Shop to gather materials, I hadn't realized how large the plains were.
I think someone could get lost in here and never find their way out…
Even though the danger level is 6, the sheer size alone looks like it would be enough to finish you.
There were certain flowers that only bloomed here.
We came here to collect drug ingredients. The Tool Shop seems to hire adventurers for this quest every time the flowers bloom.
I know how many we need to gather, but the amount is rather large.

【Man-Eating Flower appeared! HP:44】

In addition to that, unneeded flowers come by every so often.
Although it eats people, why does it bloom at such a remote place…?
'It's going to be burned by Roel', and as soon as I thought that, the monster caught fire.

【Roel used Fire Rod!】
【Man-Eating Flower received 233 damage!】
【Man-Eating Flower was defeated!　HP:0/44】

"Roel, amazing…"

When we stopped by the weapon shop yesterday, we had asked Kozow about the Fire Rod and from what he said it seems the flame effect is only a low grade magic. The monsters shouldn't be defeated by a low grade magic though, even if it is exploiting a weakness…but Roel was still mercilessly burning the monsters.

"It's because these monsters are really weak to fire."

Roel said that, but there isn't even an ash left where the monster burned.
Because she's controlling her magic so well, I think she just has naturally high magic power.
As we left the scene of the crime Roel was happily humming a song.
For a girl to sing after burning something so mercilessly…is a unique scene.
Though I can't speak, pot calling the kettle black.

"Hey, isn't there a lot of flowers that way? Let's gather over there.

"We can gather flowers while taking care of the monsters."

Saying those words, Roel was tightly holding onto her Fire Rod and anxiously waiting for a monster to appear.
I unexpectedly saw her make an aggressive face…I shouldn't tease her too much.

"Ok, is this much fine? Adding Roel's amount to mine, we have quite a bit."

"I can't carry any more than this. Cynthia-chan from the Tool Shop will surely be pleased with this much."

"T-that is!"

In the distance I saw 3 adventurers fighting a Tiger-like monster.
It was the 3 sisters.
As the tiger got close, I realized I hadn't seen it yet. It's probably a floor monster.
If that the case, it's not an opponent that those 3 can take on.

【<Plains Runner> appeared! HP:565】
*(TL:*草原を疾駆する者*)*

"Tsuuuu!"

【Ai attacked! <Plains Runner> quickly evaded!】

The large tiger evaded Ai's large axe and didn't miss the chance presented by her backswing.
The beast attacked Ai with its sharp fangs.

【Mai fired Double shot! <Plains Runner> quickly evaded!】

Ai approached the <Plains Runner> and aimed at it while Mai released arrows towards its face, but the attacks ended up being evaded and made a dry sound as they hit the ground.
The <Plains Runner> changed its target to the one who was releasing the arrows.

"W-what should we do!? How can we win against this!?"

Mai was shouting and lost her composure. The <Plains Runner> ignored her yelling and rushed at her with a speed she couldn't react to.
Just as it began to bite Mai's head off it realized something was wrong with its body.
The <Plains Runner> had been cut into two, and it gushed blood as it collapsed onto the ground.

【Ryua fired Sonic Ripper!】
【<Plains Runner> received 224028 damage!】
【<Plains Runner> was defeated! HP:0/565】

"Good thing I made it in time."

I'm glad I hit the monster from that distance.
Mai fell to the ground as her strength left her.

"Ryua-san! For you to come to our aid…"

Ai rushed over to me full of thanks but out of breath.
It seems the youngest one, Mi, was really scared. She was just sitting on the ground.

"That monster is a floor monster right?"

"Yes, if Ryua-san hadn't come to help us, we would have been in trouble…"

"You're unbelievably strong…Ryua-san, just what are you…?"

Mai was surprised when she looked at the corpse of the tiger that had been cut in two.

"Are the 3 of you here for a quest?"

"Yes, we came here for the flowers that the Tool Shop wanted."

"Really? We're doing the same quest then. So, did you find some?"

"We got a fair amount…hey, for you two to gather that much, just as I thought you're really amazing…"

Taking a quick look around, there doesn't seem to be much left we could gather.
I don't know if it was that monster's fault, but these girls seem to be having a really difficult time.

///

After we went to the guild to deliver the items and settle the quest, the 3 sisters invited us to their house as a thank you for saving them.
We walked through the streetways of Kwimill for a while until we reached a one-story house made of bricks.
It seems a little large for just the 3 sisters to live in.

"Sorry, it's not much but…"

As she said that, we were presented with Poporu juice and a pancake as dessert for later.
I was entranced by the sweetness of this juice, I didn't expect it to be this delicious.
Roel looks like she wanted to ask for another one, but it seem she still she has some restraint.

"Ryua-san, why are you so strong? I can't believe that you are just a C rank."

"Mm, I wonder why?"

It's because I trained at the <Caves of Hell>. I wonder if I should tell them about it?
Tolppo believed my story easily, but I wonder if these girls will as well?

"My mother thought I would achieve great things and gave me her bow, but it seems I'm not that good with it."

"As for me, my father gave me his axe…but the size is absurd. This is too big for a woman to swing comfortably."

I heard "Teehee" come from the mouths of those 2, it seems they were bashful.
It seems the youngest is done mulling over what had happened. She unsteadily approached Roel and I.
(TL: 末っ子は失禁の処理を終えたのか、ひょこひょことボク達のところへ来る。*)*

"……thank you."

She bowed and quickly retreated behind her sisters who were sitting on their chairs and completely hid herself.
I think that a child being an adventurer is just unreasonable…
Are her older sisters okay with her going through the scary situations an adventurer faces?
Well, I say that but I was even younger than her when I was surviving in the <Caves of Hell>…
At that time I was…huh? I wonder what I did back then.
I…wonder why I can't even remember a little bit about when I was that young?

"That was delicious! Thanks for the meal!"

“You’re welcome. Even though you are the ones that saves our lives, this is all we can do for you. Sorry…”

“I didn’t save you for this, so don’t worry about it. Though, why did the 3 of you become adventurers?”

“OOOOOOIIII!”

Suddenly we heard an angry yell from outside.
I realized that the 3 girls had frozen expressions on their faces.

“This months quota, are you able to pay it?”

“Onee-chan…”

Mai was looking to Ai for help, but Ai was calm.
No, that’s wrong. She probably just appears like that on the outside.
Ai thought about something for a short while and then slowly opened the door.
Outside was a middle aged man with a white writing brush-like beard and several armed men.
Next to Brushbeard stood an expressionless guy with a slender sword.
I was thinking about how much you would need to bend the slender sword to break it…
I was excited by the sword since it was really interesting to look at, but I should be focusing on the situation right now.

“Oh! Oh! Since you’re here, quickly come out and pay. I came here to receive this month’s quota.”

“…Yes.”

“Oooh, well done, well done!…Hmmm? Oh my, oh my! It’s not enough!”

“We’ll definitely pay the rest to you soon.”

“It’s a quota, you know? I understand that you’re having a hard time with your livelihood, but there is a agreement.”

“We’re sorry.”

“Is there anything left from when your parents were alive? You need to take this more seriously…well, doesn’t look there is any other way.”
(TL: あなた達のご両親が生前、残したものですよ。*)*

Brushbeard stroked his beard while eyeing the 3 sisters like he was licking them.

“Since you can’t pay with money, it’ll have to be with your body.”

“T-that is…”

“If you won’t offer yourself, it’s fine if one of your sisters will.”

“Somehow! We will somehow pay it! Please let us go just this time!”

“Fuuun, no matter how many times you say ‘Just this time’”

Ai was frantically lowering her head.
The other sisters were silently watching what was happening.

“I may look like this, but in business we need to be precise and punctual when dealing with one another. A deadline is a deadline, and if we don’t keep it then we will lose the respect that people have towards us. That much should be obvious, do I even need to explain this to you?”

“Yes, it’s just as you said…”

“Well, I’m not a demon. Just this time, I will wait for 5 extra days. Farewell.”

Brushbeard lead the bad looking men away and they left as a group.

“Will we be able to manage within the 5 days?”

“Yes, somehow.”

“Those people just now, they’re part of the Gametts Firm right? Could you girls possibly…?”

Roel wore a face showing she wanted an answer as she asked that.
I wonder what the Gametts Firm is?

“That’s right. When our parents died, we borrowed some money. Since we didn’t borrow too much the monthly payment quota is manageable, thankfully.”

Mai was worried about Ai and showed confusion as she tried to follow the conversation.
It’s not impossible she said, but she wasn’t even able to pay the quota just now.

“Did you girls become adventurers because of that?”

“Yes, you’re correct. Since our parents are no longer here we decided to cooperate to live. We tried other jobs unsuccessfully since not many places could employ us, so we eventually gave up and became adventurers.”

Their parents are no longer alive….
I know how hard it is to live alone as a child.
Having no one to rely on or confide in is more severe than you can imagine.

“But taking on that tiger was insane. It may have been a floor monster…even I got worried when I saw you.”

“We thought about getting strong quickly to get high paying quests…sorry for troubling you.”

“When we measured our levels today, we thought we could manage it as level 3’s.”

The danger level alone is 6, trying to take it on at level 3 is suicide.
If this goes on, these girls might really die someday.
Anyways, I can’t forgive the bearded guy.

“So how much money did you borrow?”

“About 2 million gold…”

“Two million!?”

Roel was shocked as she repeated that number, and I caught her as she fell.
2 million…even we wouldn’t be able to pay that off.
But that threat from earlier was too extreme for that amount of money.
(TL: でもいくら借りたお金とはいえ、さっきのはあんまりだ。*)*

“If the money was paid off, that guy won’t be complaining anymore right?”

“Yes, if we pay this month’s quota and then pay off the rest they will…”

“Roel, they’re in need of help.”

“Yes, you’re right…it’s fine to ask us if there is something we can do to help…Ah, that’s right! How about forming a party with us? Hey, Ryua-chan, it’s fine right?”

“Y-yes?”

“We will support you to the best of our ability. So, will you let us help you?”

“B-but…”

So it’s like that. Such a simple answer.
Even though these girls are inexperienced, if we support them then their skills will improve and they will grow stronger.
They’ll also be able to pay their debt off at the same time, so it’s like killing two birds with one stone.

“It’s fine. Since it’s something we can do to help, we’ll do it”

“Onee-chan, isn’t it fine to depend on them? Honestly, if it’s just us like earlier…we weren’t able to do it.”

“…Then, can you please help us out?”

“For sure!”

We ended up answering in an unusually tense tone for some reason.
Now that we’re a large party of 5, what quest should we take?

Chapter 22 – The Circumstances of the 3 Sisters Part 3

"T-that person! Could he possibly be Seigel-san the Dragon Hunter?!"

As we were finishing the settling of our quest at the counter, Roel had suddenly pointed her finger at a silver-haired man.
His weapon was really unusual, it was a gigantic blade. I never even thought of a weapon like that.

"Cutie-pie did you just call me…? Woah?!"

Seigel pointed at us while doing an exaggerated pose.
'Cutie-pie'? I don't understand what that means but I think it's a word that only this person would use.

"Oou! 5 cuties?! Are you all by any chance my fans?! What do I do? I want to give you my signature but there doesn't seem to be any time for you to get some paper…so then, how about letting me write it on your weapons?"

"No, its fine"

Seigel who was rambling on and on was completely stopped by that short phrase from Ai.
A no is definitely a no, the reliable older sister clearly said it.
I think its reassuring for the 2 younger sisters.

"You're the dragon hunter Seigel, right? I didn't think that you would be here at Kwimill."

"Roel, is this person famous?"

"Of course he's famous. He holds the position of one of the top 3 adventurers! There was an article where he was interviewed by the Dungeon Diving Rascals Magazine, you know. It's impossible for him not to be well known. When he trekked through the Giginja dungeon with a danger level of 60, he was the first in the world able to defeat the <Volcanic Dawn Dragon> alone."
(TL: my first try of the name was "Explosive Flame Dragon" but when i talked with it with my ED it turned into Volcanic Dawn Dragon if you have any better name for this this is its jp name 暁の爆炎竜) (ED: Explosive Flame = Volcano, and Dawn was in the name. Seems straight forward to me :I)

I wonder if Roel is a fan of this person?
At any rate, it seems he really is famous…but he's way too overconfident a person.

"So~ what quest are you cuties going to take together? Aaaah, I'd like to teach you a lot of things but unfortunately I have other plans. I'm really sorry, please don't feel bad."

“We won’t need that. Ryua-san, Roel-san. How about this quest?”

Seigel was cruelly ignored by Ai and hung his head while she was pretending to continue as usual.
The quest was:
[I want you to collect honey from the <Terror Bee>s in the <Bees Forest>]
[Client: Tool shop Cynthia]
[Reward: 1100G + extra for more honey]

“The <Bees Forest> and <Bear Forest> are related forests, right…? But I’m sure its Danger level is 5…”

“I know that we’re aiming a little too high, but we want to get stronger quickly.”

“I understand, leave it to me.”

By no means was this a promise with no consideration to it. I’m serious about wanting to lend my power to them. Helping them is what I want to do.

“A <Terror Bee> huh…I wonder if I’ll be able to hit them with my arrows?”

Mai looks like she was insecure about the bow and arrows she was carrying.
Mi was cheering Mai on by patting her lower back with her small hand.

“That’s right…mom and dad aren’t here anymore so we promised that we’ll do our best.”

Mi did a strong, encouraging nod.
Her short and fluffy chestnut-colored hair was bouncing as she nodded.
Mai’s waist-length hair was moving in harmony with Mi.
The 3 of them combining their strengths to persists and live on…it’s rather praiseworthy. Seeing them like this makes me want to help them more and more.

“<Bees Forest>! The <Terror Bee> on its own is not a big deal but be careful of swarms. You really need to be careful. The floor monster is called <Violent Nectar Mother>, and it will require extra attention to deal with. You can consider this monster to be the queen of the <Terror Bee>s, it’s rarely seen but if by chance you encounter it, retreat. It’s not something that you girls should fight.”

“Thank you very much.”

“No, I’ll accept your thanks once you come back alive. Just like how it was at Zenbei.”

“Ryua-san, Roel-san. If you’re prepared, should we go?”

The lively and energetic Ai lead us.
I pitied Siegel just a little bit.

///

It's shallower than <Bear Forest>, it would be more fitting to call this place <Bee's forest>.
But I don't think I'd even call it a forest. <Bee's Woods> is more appropriate.
The monsters living here aren't only <Terror Bees> though.

【<Flying Squirrel of Gale> x2 appeared!　HP:34】

Suddenly a flying squirrel came down from a tree.
While it was gliding it fired wind magic at us.

【<Flying Squirrel of Gale> cast Wind Cutter!】

One of the wind blades flew at Mai.
I wouldn't let something like that reach her so I erased it with wind pressure from one of my hands.

"T-t-thank you……"

"I'll absolutely protect you, so calm down and properly aim."

"Yeah!"

Mai took a deep breath and took aim at the <Flying Squirrel> that was gliding from tree to tree.
When the <Flying Squirrel> stopped she released her arrow.

【Mai attacked! <Flying Squirrel of Gale> received 25 damage! HP:9/34】

The arrow was sticking out of the monster as it fell from the tree. Ai struck at it with her axe, not showing any mercy.

【Ai Attacked! <Flying Squirrel of Gale> received 52 damage!】
【<Flying Squirrel of Gale> was defeated! HP:0/34】
"W-we did it!"

"There are still some left! Don't relax yet!"

Just as those words were spoken, one of the <Flying Squirrel>s retaliated and charged at Ai.

【<Flying Squirrel of Gale> attacked! Ai received 11 damage! HP:20/31】

"Ugh!"

It was tunnel visioning on Ai who had fallen down and started to chant wind magic.
I shouldn't let her be in such a defenseless state any longer. I drove away the squirrel and quickly slashed it to defeat it.

"Mi-chan, please use recovery magic on your sister."

Roel gently urged Mi who was getting flustered.

Using both of her small hands she cast <Heal> on Ai.

"Yeah, you did a good job."

Mi blushed when she heard Roel praising her.

"Thank you…Mi from the start was a shy child, so how…"

"Children tend to get flustered much faster since they don't know what to do. But Mi-chan, you need to make sure that your sisters can hear your voice, okay? Don't feel shy and just say what you need to say."

"……yes."

Her voice was as quiet as a mouse.
Using all her strength she had shown her determination to us.
Roel was somehow able to handle this shy little girl.

"Thank you very much. Sorry for the trouble…"

Ai stabbed her axe into the ground and her posture faltered.
She was sighing as she was apologizing.

"In combat, you need to stay calm and not be careless. I want you to understand that."

"Okay."

They seemed to be encouraged by those words, and if these 3 follow our advice when they fight…I don't think we'll need the recovery items.
There are many nimble monsters that Ai's axe won't be able to hit easily, like those squirrels.
I'm not going to suggest she stops being an Axe fighter, but we need to find a way to utilize her strengths effectively.

We advanced by pushing through the plants until we encountered a group of bees as big as a human head.
There was something dangling from a nearby tree…if I'm not mistaken that would be the nest of the <Terror Bees>.
We finally reached our goal, but the number of opponents is…

"T-those are <Terror Bee>s? So many…"

Mai swallowed hard.
I was curious as to why the honey had such a high price. It seems it's because of this.
There's probably a trick to gathering the honey but I don't have the patience to think about it.
I recklessly charged the beehive.

【Terror Bee x20 appeared ! HP:36】

The bees came at me all at once.
The countless stingers that came to stab me looked identical to the scorpion's tail from the cave…I'm not willing to get stung.
The bees rotated around me to cut me off from the group.
(TL: ボクは回転しながら周囲のハチを斬り捨てる。*)*
I don't feel even the tiniest bit of fear as they surrounded me and tried to pierce my skin. I cut them all down and some scattered to pieces as they fell.

【Terror Bee x17 was defeated!】

Mere seconds had passed since the fight started, and only 3 were left of the initial swarm.
I wonder how many bees the girls can handle…
It can poison whoever it stings, but maybe like the squirrel from the plantation they might be easy to deal with in very small numbers.

"Hey, it's your turn now!"

"Fuei?! Ah, yes!"

Ai was surprised by my sudden order, but prepared her axe and ran toward the remaining bees with a determined look in her eye.

"Don't just swing randomly! Aim at them when they're in range as they come to sting you."

Ai silently nodded and seriously focused on the bee as it approached.
The <Terror Bee> moved here and there, circling around as it prepared to attack, and at the last moment as it flew at Ai, she brought down her axe.
Ai only grazed the bee and it counter-attacked Ai who left herself open.
An arrow pierced the <Terror Bee> as it flew at her.

【Mai Attacked! <Terror Bee> received 36 damage!】
【<Terror Bee> was defeated! HP:0/36】

Ai was amazed that Mai was able to bring down the bee with her bow.
Their party is simple, but very well matched.
Only 2 bees were left, and one of them flew at Mai.

"Hiii! I-It's coming this way!"

"Ai-san! Now!"

The <Terror Bee> didn't notice Ai who had been slowly closing in behind it, and Ai swung in a straight line.
The bee was magnificently cut into two parts.
Immediately after that the remaining bee stung Ai from behind.

【Terror Bee Attacked! Ai received 6 damage!】
【Ai is poisoned! HP:25/31】

“Ah……..”

Ai began to stumble due to the poison.
This time it’s Mi’s turn to shine.
…is what I thought, but she still hasn’t learned any antidote magic.

“YOUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU!”

Mai shot an arrow at the bee out of desperation.
Honestly, that shot was better than her previous one.
The bee wouldn’t have died from a single arrow, but this is the one that had been injured earlier and Mai had landed a direct hit this time.

【Terror Bee was defeated! HP:0/36】

“W-won…we won…”

Feeling weak, Mai sat on the ground.
Ai was out of breath and staring at the corpse of the bee.

“You two are stronger than I thought…if it’s like this I think you can probably handle the 2nd floor.”

“It was thanks to you, Ryua-san. If it wasn’t for your precise instructions we wouldn’t have defeated them.”

“That’s true…I was really surprised. Ryua-san, why are you a C rank with such amazing skills?”

“I’ve only been an adventurer for a short while…”

Rather than explaining everything I just gave a vague answer.
(TL: 説明するには長すぎる経緯なのもあって曖昧な返答になってしまった。*)*

“Ryua, I’m not really in any position to say this but I think you would’ve already become an A rank if you weren’t paired with me.”

“That isn’t true, you know. I need you with me, Roel. I’ve been saved by you a lot. You’ve also been levelling up at a quick pace recently.”

Everything I said was the truth. Especially about her levelling, I’m really surprised by how fast she’s grown from level 2 to 10.
I think she was supposed to be like that from the start.

“Ryua-chan…”

I’m not sure if she’s happy or embarrassed, but Roel was smiling while looking down.

“Roel-san is already at Level 10…We will also need to work hard.”

Ai stirred and Mai was grasping her Bow tightly.
Mi is…hmm? Mi is?

“Hey, where’s Mi?”

As I said that, the atmosphere froze.

///

“Oh? Boy, what are you doing here?”

Seigel spoke to a child who was crying on the roadside.
The child was crying so hard he wasn’t able to talk well.

“Did someone make you cry?”

Seigel knelt down so that they would see eye to eye.
It seemed to give the child peace of mind and he started to talk.

“Papa are Mama were at home, then scary people came…my home…breaking…many things…*hic*…*hic*”

“Scary people…”

Seigel thought about what he heard for a brief moment and then stroked the child’s head.

“Boy, this Onii-san will save you. Onii-san may look like this but I am an A rank adventurer. That means I’m unbelievably strong, you know.”

Now, there are S rank monsters in existence, but Siegel planned on suppressing them one by one.

“Really? Ojisan will?”

“Ah, Onii-san will absolutely save you.”

Siegel was stubbornly emphasizing the “Onii-san” part.
The child lead Siegel to his house. Calling this place destroyed was putting it lightly, the house would be better described as completely demolished.
The walls were in small pieces without any connection to the neighbouring rooms. The pieces were numerous and very spread out.
(TL: 壁がこま切れになり、床や壁も関係なくいくつにもバラバラにされている。)
Strangely enough there wasn’t any furniture.
Seeing both the first floor and the 2nd floor, the house was really in a miserable state.
I think that’s the entrance? Approaching what was left of the door were the child’s parents, tears falling down their faces.

“Can you tell me just what in the world happened here?”

"It's already the end…everyone we had is now completely gone. Our home was the last thing we could cling on to, but this time it was taken from us as well…"

Siegel wasn't able to get the reason from them but he was able to make a guess.
He understood that this wasn't just a normal robbery.

"Is it possibly…debt?"

"W-why do you care!?"

As one would expect, these people weren't in a state to talk properly after having something like this happen to them.
Giving up on having them tell him, he decided to pry it out of them himself.

"Gametts Firm."

Just that one word made both the parents flinch and tremble.
Gametts Firm was just recently started up by a guy named Gametts, it's a rather corrupt company.
It had gathered capable adventurers, had strict security, and was based here in the sticks.

"Be at ease. I will settle all of this. Just be patient."

"Ha…?"

'The crying face of a mother isn't beautiful'.
That secret thought from Siegel had no relation to his decision. He ran towards the Gametts Firm.

Chapter 23 – The Circumstances of the 3 Sisters Part 4

"Is Ryua-san going to be fine?"

"It's Ryua-chan, even she would be fine at <Bear Forest>. Just relax and wait patiently."

///

I rushed around the forest at the fastest speed I could muster, searching for Mi.
I've been yelling out her name but there hasn't been any reply.
I had searched the entire <Bees Forest> but was unable to find her.
It may have turned into a worst-case scenario where we wandered into the <Bear Forest>… since it's directly next to this forest it's not an impossibility.
<Bear Forest> and <Bees Forest>…the <Bear Forest> is a deeper forest than this one.
Since tall trees grow there, the deep forest is just like a jungle.
I had passed through the <Bear Forest> once before.

My trek from the <Caves of Hell> to Kwimill had me run through it.
Back then I hadn't know that place had such a name.
This place…it would be apt to say it had a dark atmosphere to it.
I wonder why Mi separated from us?
Better yet, how did nobody notice?
It's too late to worry about it now…but no matter how much I search I haven't been able to find her.
I jumped from branch to branch in the trees to search for her.

I realized that I had stepped on something when I landed on one of the branches.
I looked below me, only to see a long neck.
A large body began to stand up in front of me.
Trying to look like it was scrubbing something off, it shook its head.

【Poison Salamander appeared! HP:1520】

I remembered the time when something like this guy came from Bear Forest to the Strange Plains.

"This time, just be obedient and stay in this forest."

It'd be troublesome to draw my sword so I just kept moving while trying to shake it off.
It was mowing down the trees while raising a fierce roar as it chased after me.
Just how tenacious is this monster? Right then, I had a flashback in my memories.

It was during my trip to Kwimill.
Just like I had done now, I stepped on something.
Even back then, I thought it troublesome and kept moving while trying to lose whatever was following me.
I remember what Gantetsu had said about it.
'The <Poison Salamander> is a tenacious monster that won't forget a grudge'.
…No way. That <Poison Salamander> was my fault?
I'm positive I lost the creature…even those large lizards must lose prey here and there.
I wonder how many of them gave up chasing me…

While I was thinking, the <Poison Salamander> had caught up and swung its leg at me.

【Poison Salamander attacked!】
【Ryua received no damage!】

Before the Salamander could step on me I hurled its body and stood up in one smooth motion, continuing my train of thought and movement.

【Poison Salamander was defeated! HP:0/1520】

…it was my fault that those people were killed?

No, that's impossible.

That can't be right. Roel would believe me.
Of course she would, she approached me even though I was different from the other adventurers.
(TL: ボク以外の冒険者だって来るはずだ。*)*
I'm not wrong…am I?

I started feeling dizzy, and I can't find Mi anywhere.
What should I do? How can I find her?
If something happened to her, the other two sisters will…

"MI-CHAAAAAAAAAA~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~N!"

I shouted from the bottom of my stomach.
My throat hurts from all this yelling.

【Steel Bear appeared! HP:831】

"Shut up!"

I swung a single fist at the stomach of the bear.
Its upper body disappeared and only the lower half remained.

【Steel Bear was defeated! HP:0/831】

I shouldn't be wasting my time with these things, not now.
I need to increase my pace of searching this forest.

"If you can hear me, please answer!"

///3rd Person & Mi's Perspective///

Before I had realized it, I was in the deeper part of the forest.
The atmosphere…is different than before.
The thick trees were so tall it looked like they reached the sky and the leaves are layered so heavily that the surroundings were dark.

Right from the start I was opposed to my beloved sisters becoming adventurers.
It was dangerous for me to be alone at the house, so in the end I was permitted to come with them.
(TL: 家で一人でいると物騒な事もあるという事で最終的には許された。*)*
I was somehow able to use recovery magic from birth, that's why I became a healer.

Mi felt that she was totally neglected.
She wasn't able to fulfill her role and both of her sisters were all over Ryua and Roel…it wasn't pleasant to Mi.

Her heart wasn't happy that her sisters had been stolen from her.
She separated wordlessly from the group for that reason.

But before she had realized it, she was in this forest.

Dreadful monsters lurked in this forest. Mi eventually came to realize the situation she was in.
If she was found by a monster here in the <Bear Forest>, she would lose her life.
She was consumed by fear and become unable to talk.

【Hellbear appeared! HP:1430】

As she stepped on a dry branch, it made a loud cracking sound that drew a monster many times her mass right in front of her.
Saliva was spilling from its mouth, it wasn't going to let this girl escape.

The bear brought its arm down on the girl who wasn't moving, but before it made contact the bear stopped.
It immediately retreated into the forest. The little girl, frightened beyond belief, ran the opposite way.
She thought that she was saved, but that only lasted a moment as she heard something similar to a vibration in the air.
Trembling as she looked back, there was a shadow.
No, not a shadow, it's whole body was black. To the little girl, it was like a mountain.
The shining, golden eyes of the shadow looked directly at Mi.
This wasn't just a monster…Mi understood that much.
That bear from earlier had seen this and ran.
She had thought she heard a cry as it disappeared into the trees…

【<The Violent King of the Quiet Forest> appeared! HP:5046】

This <The Violent King of the Quiet Forest>, rather than calling it the king of the bears, dictator suits it better.
There were traces that it was recently hunting since its claws were dyed with red.

Mi, controlled by fear, couldn't run away.
Something warm was streaming down her thighs.
Mi was unable to stand any longer and fell on her rear.

"He…lp…"

Mustering out her courage she raised a voice.

—-'you need to make sure that your sisters can hear your voice, okay?'

For some reason the words of Roel resounded in her head.
If she raised her voice, who knows who might hear it.
Even if she wanted to talk about something, her words never came out and it was frustrating.
"I want to talk with everyone…"
She didn't want to die in such place.

Mi opened her mouth and made a very loud shout.

“ONEE-CHAAAA~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~N!”

Just before <The Violent King of the Quiet Forest> ended her life, something jumped in front of her and the arm of the bear was slashed.

///Ryua’s Perspective///

While raising my sword overhead, I realized I was looking at the ruler of the forest.
I was able to save the little girl behind me.
Nobody would want to die in a place like this, it would fill them with regret.
As long as Mi is alive, the sisters can keep smiling.

“It’s going to be okay.”

While looking forward I tried to encourage Mi.
<The Violent King of the Quiet Forest> didn’t raise a cry, rather it just silently glared at me and then charged with both of its arms.
(TL: 暴王は雄叫びをあげる事もなく、ただ静かにボクの体を両腕でさばこうと行動を開始した。*)*
I feel like this monster is on a different level than what I’ve fought here before.
It’s probably the floor monster.

“Let’s leave this forest quickly.”

I slashed 2,3 times. As I swung my sword against <The Violent King of the Quiet Forest>, its body separated into 3 equal parts.
I figured its pelt would be expensive material so I tried to leave as much as possible intact.

【Ryua attacked! <The Violent King of the Quiet Forest> received 243319 damage!】
【<The Violent King of the Quiet Forest> was defeated! HP:0/5046】

I was going to call Mi and give her peace of mind knowing the beast was dead, but I found her already clinging to me, tears flowing.

“T-th-thank…you…*sniffle*…”

“Even if you hate me, I will still protect you. I don’t want any of you sisters making such a sad face.”

“I don’t…hate…you.”

Her words were fragmented as she cried. I slowly picked up on what she was trying to say.
With her small and fragile body, I felt enveloped in a tender feeling.

///

“Hmmm, are you here to discuss taking a loan?”

“Hey, Gametts-san, there are many people being treated unfairly by you. ‘I came here to pass judgement’ is what I came to discuss.

“Hoho~, no way. Is this a dangerous request from the guild?”

“No, this is a personal matter. The guild didn’t have anything to do with this.”

“Hou~, adventurers are just people who fight, it seems.”

Gametts leaned back and sunk into his soft chair, looking a the A rank adventurer before him like he was nothing.

“A rank and a dragon hunter, was it?”

【Siegel Lv: 66|Class: Dragon Hunter|Rank: A】

“Ah~, so you are that famous Dragon Hunter. I never thought that I’d be able to meet you. Anyways, money that has been borrowed has to be returned, isn’t that natural? How can you call that unfair?”

“There is a family that shed tears because of your actions. That alone is enough.”

“Well, this talk isn’t really going anywhere. So, do you have any evidence?”

“I only need to look for you and arrest you.”
(TL: それはおまえをふんじばってから探すさ*)*

“You are quite the fool, going so far for something like this…you really are an idiot. Did you come here thinking I would just give up? Zangiri!”

“…….is it fine to kill him?”

Beside Gametts was a man, his body swaying like it was a mirage.
His hair was messy and didn’t look like it had been washed in a while, giving an unclean impression.
His kimono was open down to his chest, it seems he really doesn’t care about how he looks.

“Are you his bodyguard? You sure have the atmosphere of one.”

Zangiri slowly drew his weapon.

“<Kougetsuzan>”

A vacuum of wind slashed at Seigel, he was completely unprepared for it.
(TL: 真空の刃としか思えない斬撃が縦にセイゲルを襲った。*)*
Moon Ring blade, a weapon from a foreign country.
It was like an invisible ring. It had a rhythm of 2,3,4 as it sliced, cornering Seigel.
He couldn’t avoid the attack very well and his chest was bleeding, but it wasn’t a big deal.

——this guy is dangerous.

After fighting many formidable enemies, Siegel can judge an opponent's strength.
This ill-mannered person in front of him has killed too many people.
That technique just now was aiming for the vitals.
Those attacks couldn't even be dodged by a hair.
His armor has cuts all over it and blood was leaking from his chest.

"Burst Braver!"

He swung his big sword towards Zangiri, but since the room is small he only did a light chain explosion.
Actually, Gametts had already escaped from the room, not that there was a room now as it was blown to pieces.
There was a scream amid the explosions, but Siegel didn't care anymore.
He can't go easy on this opponent.
Not taking this villain seriously would be a mistake.
That was proven to be true, as there was something like an explosion and Zangiri was right in front of him.
(TL:　その証拠に、そんな爆発など目の前に起こってなかったといわんばかりに間合いを一瞬で詰められた。)
'So that's what instant movement is', he thought at that moment.

"<ChiiriSakura>"

As if Zangiri was drawing a crescent moon with his weapon, it passed through Siegel's body.
Blood began gushing like a fountain up into the sky, it looked like cherry petals falling.

"Even an ally of justice…sometimes…gets defeat…ed…"

As Siegel lost consciousness he saw Zangiri staring at him with a blank expression on his face.

Chapter 24 – The Circumstances of the 3 Sisters Part 5

【Violent Nectar Mother appeared!　HP:1211】

"T-th-that is…!"

Mai was pointing with a shaking finger towards the bee. It was much larger than any of the <Terror Bee>s we had seen so far.
It had 8 wings and a stinger as long as its body.
Putting this creature beside an adult male, it's only a little larger. Even so, <Terror Bee>s have an aura that makes you feel like it can easily pierce beginner adventurers.
(TL:　総合的なサイズは成人男性よりもわずかに下回る程度だがテラービーとは一線を画すオーラ

が新米冒険者に刺すように伝わってきた。)

“Even though we’ve been able to get the honey…why does it have to appear now? We should retreat.”

“What about Ryua-san and Mi!?”

“Ryua-chan and Mi-chan are fine! Let’s escape!”

Roel pulled Mai and Ai’s hand and started running.
The wings of the queen bee began to reverberate through the forest as it chased them.

“It’s so loud! How did we not notice it!?”

“It’s too late for that now!”

Ai yelled at Mai, silencing her.
The truth is, there’s not much they can do. The queen summoned <Terror Bee>s from the surrounding woods as it flew.
They had to escape from the forest as fast as possible, and they were moving at full speed.

【The <Violent Nectar Mother> manipulated the <Terror Bee>s! The <Terror Bee>s flew in a row!】

They had formed into an ‘ | ‘ shape and then charged the girls.
(TL: テラービーの群れは八の字を描いたと思ったら順次並んで三人に向かってきた。)

【All the <Terror Bee>s attacked!】
【Roel received 14 damage! HP: 94/108】
【Ai received 21 damage! HP:10/31】
【Mai received 22 damage! HP:4/26】

【The <Violent Nectar Mother> summoned more <Terror Bee>s!】

The amount of bees doubled. They had already been outmatched before this, but now it’s just absurd.
Ai didn’t know what to do. She was worried about her sister who was on the verge of death and doing her best even though their escape was blocked. The 3 of them were surrounded.

“Mai! Keep going!”

“O…nee-san…”

The bees were planning their next attack, leaving no time to use <Heal>, Tensing up, Ai stumbled and fell over. The queen bee moved in to capitalize on that blunder.

【The <Violent Nectar Mother> attacked!】

Roel jumped in front of Ai.

The <Violent Nectar Mother>’s long stinger stabbed Roel.

【Roel received 91 damage! HP:3/108】

The stinger was sticking out of Roel’s back.
The poison immediately spread and Roel collapsed.

“R-Roel-san!”

“YOUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU!”

A loud war cry was hard from Ryua who was falling like a meteor from the sky. She brought her sword down on the queen.

/ / /

When the queen has stabbed Roel, I slashed at it as I fell. There wasn’t even a particle left of it, the queen had been utterly obliterated from the force of the strike. I had even left fissures from the strength of my attack, but I don’t care.
Just as I returned, Roel was…

【Ryua Attacked! Critical hit! 】
【The <Violent Nectar Mother> received 1363391 damage!】
【The <Violent Nectar Mother> was defeated! HP:0/1211】

“ROEL!”

“I-I’m fi…ne…”

“I’ll use an antidote right away!”

“<Cure>…<Heal>…<Heal>…<Heal>…”

Mi had been riding on me up till now, but she had gotten off of me and was healing Roel.
It seems she can use Cure, I wonder when that happened?

At any rate, I had been careless.
If I had arrived sooner, would things have been different?
Should I have just left the gathered honey and let the three of them escape?
I was careless…even though I defeated the monster, I feel nothing but regret.

“Mi-chan, thank you…I’m better now.”

Roel was teetering was she stood up. Mi had a very worried expression on her face as she watched.

“Roel, sorry, I…wasn’t able to protect you…”

“Ryua-chan protected Mi-chan. That itself is already enough, you know.”

Those encouraging words didn't resound within me at all.
If I had more power than this, I could have saved Mi and returned faster…what I have isn't enough. What can I do to get stronger than this?

"I'm sorry, we're still very inexperienced…we only ended up troubling you. I don't know what we could do to possibly apologize…"

Ai was really feeling down about the events that had unfolded and apologized to us.

"You too Mi! You really worried us…"

Mi was shaking her head and trembling.
I wonder if that was her way of apologizing?
Just as I thought, I need to get stronger. Not just me though, all of us.
Since we already got the honey we needed for the quest, we quickly left the forest.

/ / /

"Thanks! With this I can make a lot of Royal Jellies!"

The girl from the tool shop, Cynthia, had sparkles in her eyes as she looked at the honey she was holding like a child with a new toy.

"Ah, now that I think about it, are you alright? The floor monster appeared, didn't it?"

"We were attacked but I defeated it,"

"Seriously?! Then, then, maybe you picked up that guy's stinger?! Kozow-san would be really delighted, you know?"

"The bee vanished so I wasn't able to."

"Vani……what?"

"Well, that's fine" she said to finish the conversation. Cynthia once again went back to looking at the honey.
It seems like she was only there to finish up her business with us, as she disappeared into the shop right away with the honey in tow.
Royal jelly…just what kind of item is it?

/ / /

The inside of the guild was noisy.
It seems that Siegel was seriously injured and was found collapsed alongside some trash.
He was in a state where you could easily mistake him for dead, but it seems he was faintly breathing.

"For someone to be able to give Seigel such a beating…"
"The Heal Station was concentrating on his medical care but even now he still won't wake

up…”
“That guy…that guy ran out of luck.”

It was stirring inside the guild.
The murmurs started to focus on the main topic.
(TL: その呟きの主に視線が集まる。*)*

“The legendary <Master Swordsman Zangiri>…has revived.”

Clattering and shaking, an adventurer entered.
I thought that he was older than Gantetsu, that old man was carrying his own weapon, while he trembling as he was talking.
He looks older than Gantetsu, and with his weapon in his hand he trembled as he walked.

“Gametts Firm has a bodyguard. It’s…Zangiri himself! That’s right, Zangiri did this!”

“O-old man calm down…”

A female wizard was attempting to calm him down but Oldman didn’t stop.

“That guy killed over 100,000 people when he was alive! He’s been revived to kill again!”

“Zangiri died over 70 years ago! You should know that! Get a hold of yourself!”

Some of the adventurers were becoming agitated at Oldman, and several people stepped up to kick him out of the guild.

“Roel, the Seigel guy is……”

“Yeah……..I can’t believe it. But Seigel-san…I wonder why he fought that person?”

“It’s probably the bodyguard of that person from Gametts Firm…”

Mai suddenly muttered. There was another man beside Brushbeard back then. He had a changing weapon hanging from his back, and he definitely had a different status and atmosphere than the rest of them.

“B-but if we pay the quota then we don’t have to worry, right?”

It seems Mai was trying to shake off the fear with that.
It’s not like I don’t understand why she’s scared. Someone that dangerous working for the company you owe money to…you wouldn’t be able to rest easily.

“Now then, let’s brighten the mood. Let’s measure our levels!”

Ai wiped out the gloomy mood that had been hanging over us.

“Mine is just going to overflow anyways…”

It seems I'm starting to become timid…when did this happen?
I don't know what my actual level is, and watching everyone rejoicing about their <Level Up> leaves a bad taste in my mouth.
But seeing Roel happy about her <Level Up> also makes me happy.

"Wa,wa! Mi what did you do?! Your level became 12 in one go?!"

Level 8 is when you learn cure, so it makes sense now…but how did she level so much?
Oh right. I remember now.
Mi was in my party when I defeated the floor monster in the forest.
She was there when it died. That would explain it.

"What what wha~t?! My level is 9!"

Mai was surprised by the result.
I wonder how much of that is from the Bee floor monster.

"It's one of the '7 Mysteries of Adventurers' right? When in a party, all of them can become stronger at the same time."

"With just a strong adventurer and a strong opponent, everyone just suddenly got super strong huh?"

"Certainly that's a good way to level, but the risk is really big. Only your level and body become strong with that method. Yes, you may get new skills and such, but you don't get the battle experience. There's no point in growing without that."

After Mai and Ai, Aude broke in our conversation.
Seems like he's here again.

"If you fight a strong opponent, the risk of dying will increase. What you're doing by levelling like that is just risking your life later on, you know? Though who would take such a leech in the first place?"

"That's not right. You can always gain battle experience later on."
(TL:「その通りですね。うまい話なんて早々ありません」*)*

"Isn't it?"

Aude was acting exalted as he was talking against Ai who was striking back.
(TL: 得意げに語るオードに相槌をうつアイ。*)*
Even though Aude is a beginner like us, he knows a lot of stuff huh?

"Since Seigel-san taught you about that yesterday, right?"

As he was made fun of by a male adventurer, Aude made a face like he was being punished for doing something bad.

/ / /

Most of the reward was given to the 3 sisters.
They were way too reserved and modest, and we got into a dispute that got old really quickly.
It was a really tiring day. As we went home looking forward to the rest, Roel became curious about the Siegel incident from earlier and suggested that we should visit him.

Seigel was laying down on a bed covered in bandages with a strange tube sticking out.
If we didn't know we were looking at Siegel, I wouldn't have recognized him with this appearance.

"So cruel…"

Roel muttered.
Looking a this appearance, it's a miracle he survived.

"Oji-san, you did this for us…"

There was a kid we didn't know crying on the side.
Both of his parents were deep in thought while looking at Siegel, and didn't move the whole time.

"This world is hell…!"

The boy's father moaned and cried.

Gametts Firm. Zangiri.

For Siegel to end up like this…what reason did he have to fight such a losing battle?
Gametts Firm…for them to drive people into a corner like this, I should just personally….

"…chan! Ryua-chan!"

"Ah, yes?"

"Why are you making such a scary face? No way, Ryua-chan…"

"Let's leave."

Before Roel caught up with me I was already at the exit of the Heal Station.

Chapter 25 – The Circumstances of the 3 Sisters Part 6

"Now since today is the promised date, I would like to receive the quota payment."

Gametts had brought along his rather repugnant men to the residence of the sisters,
Beside him was Zangiri who seem to be looking at the empty sky.

“Yes.”

“Fumufumu~, well let me just confirm…let’s see here. Oh? Ai-san, this isn’t enough.”

“N-no way?! Take another look! With the interest it was supposed to be precisely 5000G!”

“No no, 5000G is not nearly enough, you know.”

“But we had talked about it before! The monthly quota should be 5000G right!?”

Gametts forced a sigh while the sisters glared at him.

“You need to remember that you haven’t been able to meet the quota before, and it was added onto this payment to make up for the loss. In short, the interest went up by 5%. You understand now, right?”

“But Gametts-san, you extended the settlement date yourself…and there was no mention in the contract! Why did it suddenly change now?”

“That’s right, no such thing was written there!”

Mai started to get angry and prepared to enter battle with the men in front of her. They just sneered at her and Mai’s intuition told her to stop.
She got goosebumps and stepped back.

“About that…I shouldn’t have to explain why, you should understand.”

“I totally disagree. If that was the case then why wasn’t it written in the contract?”
(TL:「納得いきません。それならば契約書にそう記しておくのが道理です」*)*

“Quota, interest. All of them were written there. Please don’t misunderstand and then try to justify yourself. Now, hand over the payment. The total quota for this month is 23250G.”

“That’s fraud!!!”

“That’s what I should say to you. If your parents had done their job properly two years ago and escorted us, my lovely subordinate wouldn’t have died. Boasting about being capable and then failing so is a cruel thing.”

“Ugh…”

The 2 of them kept silent.
Due to the debt they owed to the Gametts firm, both parents accepted the quest to be the bodyguard of Gametts to repay their loans.
The heavy burden those two had been carrying was now being dropped onto their daughter’s shoulders.

(TL: 二重の責務が重くのしかかり、今日に至る。*)*

“I’ve been looking over you like a guardian up until now, but I can’t wait for these payments anymore. You three are going to pay with your bodies. Hey!”

Gametts instructed his men.
The men rapidly moved and started to seize the sisters.

“Hiii….!”

The men pinned down Mi and bullied Mai.

“Please leave my younger sisters alone! I’ll do anything! Please!”

“Anything…?”

Ai was prostrating herself to Gametts who was staring at her suspiciously.

///

“Now that I think about it, aren’t the sisters paying the quota today?”

“Mm. I wonder if we were able to help them out enough.”

Quite a distance from our abode was the house of the sisters.
Every morning we would go to their house and travel together to the guild.
It’s only been 5 days since that started, but it’s now a routine for us.

In front of the house we found Mi and Mai crying.
At a glance you wouldn’t know what happened, but I was able to take a guess.

“Mai-chan, Mi-chan! Hey, what happened?”

“Onee-chan is…Onee-chan…in exchange for us…”

“What happened to Ai?”

I suddenly noticed that Ai was the only one not here.
I don’t know why, but it definitely had to do with the Gametts Firm.
I was boiling up just imaging their motive.

“Why…this is different from what we were told…”

From within me something was boiling and starting to flow out.

“No more…just what did we do to deserve this…Onee-chan…Onee-chan…”

Their tears fell onto the stone paving and the ground sucked them right up as if they never fell. It’s almost like the sisters were the tears that weren’t able to reach their sister who was

taken away.

"This is so cruel…just how many of those payments were left…"

Roel was clenching her teeth.
She was grasping her staff so tightly you could see blood trickling down.

"I will do something about this. For sure. Please, be at ease you two…"

I grasped Mai's hand and firmly vowed.

"Ryua…san, save onee-chan…"

Mai's disheveled hair was swaying and her face was a mess from the tears.
So, it seems Gametts drove the sisters into a corner to break the rules.
That brush beard planned it to be this way from the start.

"Ryua-chan, we need to go quickly…"

"Roel, wait here."

"No, please-"

"Wait. Here."

After the second time Roel fell silent. I was surprised that I could be this cold to her.
I wonder if Seigel felt like this…and then he was defeated. I'm sure he regretted it. That brush beard……..no Zangiri.
That man is extremely strong, but I don't care.

///

"Fufufufu…….Ai-san, you don't have to be that disappointed. As long as you're here I will give you anything you want."

Gametts' own room and office room. There was the pelt of a beast as a carpet, on the oblong desk there was a glass skull with pens stuck in it, and directly beside that was a fully spread out feather mattress king-sized bed.
Ai had been sitting in the middle of it since she walked into the room and hung her head the whole time.

"Were you worried I would sell you off to someone? No, no, who would ever sell such a prize."

"Especially a cute girl like you." he added as he looked at Ai, his eyes like a snake looking at a mouse.
Ai's body flinched and she backed off.
Gametts was on all fours and slowly cornering Ai.

“That, that is…”

“Didn’t you say you would do anything? Or were you lying? Should I call my men to get the two I left behind?”

“Please stop!…stop…”

“If that’s the case then listen to what I say.”

Gametts once again drew near to Ai.
As he put his hands on Ai’s shoulders she flinched out of reflex.

“Be obedient. If you react like that again…you understand right?”

“Father…Mother…”

“Your parents are already dead. I would know, since I killed them.”

“….eh?”

“Oops~” was all he said said as he covered his mouth with his hand.
It wasn’t that big of a mistake since it probably would have become known to her anyway. Gametts once again became talkative.

“Just now, what…?”

“Ah geez! For me to slip up like that…well, its fine. Both of your parents, they were frantically protecting me. That’s what you’ve thought up till now, right? If I let the death of my subordinate become the fault of your parents, I was sure that you girls would forever be burdened as the children of those two. Then all of you would forever be my slaves, it was a plan like that.”

“…lies!”

“No, it’s the truth. I was the one that killed my 2 subordinates, the monster was merely a means to an end. But something unexpected happened. The beast aimed at my subordinates and your mother blocked the monster’s attack. She was fatally wounded and because of the shock your father stopped and became the victim to the monster as well. I don’t think you knew about all that, did you? Ah, you are wondering what happened to me? I may look like this, but I trained hard, you know? Because fighting monsters was quite troublesome I just randomly employed a bodyguard. At any rate, in this job there dangerous people going after you at all times. The thought of being hunted hasn’t crossed your mind yet, right? Hey, are you still listening?”

Ai was at loss for words. A faint tear ran down her face, and quickly the amount increased.

“You demon…then, from the start we…”

“You cute sisters will forever be my play thi…oops, slaves. If you become one it’s a smaller

price to pay. You're good, but your younger sisters are also very cute. Especially…Mi, was it? I will make sure I pour her full with lots of my love. Hihihihihihihihihi~!"

"You brute…!"

Ai was in a rage, humiliated, and full of grief, She didn't understand why her parents had to die for something like that.
She wants to kill the pig in front of her right now, but she was powerless. Even now she was unable to speak.

"You of course are also a fine quality thing…you'll grow into a splendid adult for sure. A bountiful chest, my hand for sure will…hihihihi!"

"Someone save me…save me…"

A sound reverberated through the room as the door was being smashed on.
But when Gametts turned to face the door, it wasn't there anymore.
It had been smashed into pieces. Being the owner of the room, he was sure that noise had to be the door.

///

As I was grasping a guy by his neck, I saw Gammets and Ai on top of the bed. It was good that I made it in time, this guy I had in my hand was groaning.

"G-Gametts-san…run aw-"

Before he was able to finish talking I threw him out in the corridor.
"Gweeh!" he made such a miserable voice as he hit the wall. It seems he fainted.
Gametts wasn't too surprised, given the situation. He was able to find something agreeable in this situation and then he looked at me while bowing.

"You, certainly we met each other once. I remember 5 days ago, you were at the house of the sisters when we visited. I see, you posses such skills at such a young age."

"Get away from Ai-san."

"Fuun, that was quite a crude impression, you know. You just broke in here, how rude can you be?"

Gametts looked like he was evaluating me as he looked at me from top to bottom.
It feels disgusting. It wasn't nice being looked at like that.
(TL: 気持ち悪い、そうとしかいいようがなかった。*)*

"Ai-san, this way."

Ignoring Gametts, I pulled her hand. Suddenly a man appeared beside the door and as expected even Gametts was surprised.

“Z-Zangiri!”

In the corner of the room, Zangiri who was called finally started to show some movement.
However I knew from the start he had been there.
When I entered the room I was able to feel a man glaring at me.
It was an inquisitive, detestable stare.

“I have a proposal, I want to fight that girl outside. Otherwise the important place where you work will be destroyed again.”

“D-do whatever you want. Now Ai-san, come this way.”

Just as he was about to reach her I smashed his hand.

“AGAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!!”

“Ai-san, I will guarantee your safety if you come with me.”

I ignored Gametts’s scream, and he thrust out a demand.
No, it wasn’t a demand but rather an order. For this scoundrel to try and compromise in this situation, I really hate this person.

“Za-za-zangiri! What are you doing?! Hurry, hurry up and kill that girl!”

“It looks like that girl wants to go out…but if that’s the case then this place will become a battlefield.”

“Who cares! KILL HER!!!”

“<Kougetsuzen>”

In the same instant he was ordered, Zangiri released a vacuum of blades.
His blade was rotating while aiming for my vital parts.
I immediately understood something: This guy isn’t strong.

If this guy went to the <Caves of Hell>, I think that huge 4-headed dog could defeat him.
…Never mind, that monster was just a low class floor monster. What a foolish idea, thinking this guy could be that dangerous.

I’ve changed since I left those caves. I still don’t mind being hit but now I think ‘if I take blows then my clothes will get torn, which means we’ll need to spend more money’…in an instant I was in front of Zangiri who couldn’t react at all.

I grasped his head and smashed it into the floor.
The wooden flooring was utterly destroyed, and from Zangiri’s head a large amount of blood was pooling.

“Gah…wah…”

I don’t plan on killing him, but I want him to lie down for a bit.
My business isn’t with him.
I leisurely walked over to Gametts who was shaking out of fear.

Chapter 26 – The Circumstances of the 3 Sisters End

“Now then…”

Gametts was in a cold sweat as I pinned him with my arm.
While I was thinking of what to do with him since I don’t want to kill him, Gammets glared at me.

“D-d-don’t get cocky!”

【Gammets used <Gold Shower>!】

Countless gold coins were released from Gametts and flew at me.
I was surprised because it was from such a close range, but I just blew them away with one hand.

“Gwuuh! I-I am!”

【Gammets|Lv: 21|Class: Merchant|Rank: None】

“Merchants aren’t made for fighting, but they can be helpful depending on the situation.”
(TL:「戦闘に不向きと言われた商人だが、立ち回り次第では」*)*

He was being noisy so I gave his head a light tap.
I think I still used a little too much strength since his head was nearly blown off. Gametts fainted immediately.
It seems he had trained his body a little.
That could have turned out much worse.

“Ryua-san…did you come to help me?”

“Yeah. Let’s go back to your sisters now.”

“You’ve done so much…I can’t even imagine how I can repay you…”

“I just want the 3 of you to be happy. I don’t want to see people die anymore.”

Ai embraced me.
It looks like she was terrified. She was crying and repeating her words of gratitude again and again.

Someone stood up behind me.

I turned around and saw Zangiri, his head still gushing out blood, grasping his weapon tightly.

“Do you still want to fight?”

“If you want to defeat me you’ll have to cut off my arms and separate my head from my body.”

“You’ll die fighting with a body like that.”

“Yeah, seems so.”

As he said that I recalled how he felt in my hand earlier.
I felt something off when I threw him down.
It was similar to that thing…

“Old man, are you already dead?”

“Hou, how did you know?”

I had an unpleasant premonition about this situation. It’s like the time at the Ghost Mansion.
This person is already dead, so to speak he’s a <Vengeful Ghost>.

“You died 70 years ago, right?”

“Master swordsman Zangiri…no, human killer was my more famous title. I regretted never meeting anyone stronger than myself. But now…I see you as a worthy opponent.”

“Just for that…”

“I thought you of all people would understand.”

“Shall we finish this?”

“<Kokuu Shuugetsu>…”
(TL: Arc Moon: Heaven’s End)

I had been surrounded by a brilliant vacuum of blades, flowing towards me with the intent to mince.
Being trapped like this isn’t a threat to me, since this attack is like being swung at by a dull blade.
(TL:こんな 刃 もついてい ない のと同じような もの に囲まれた ところ で ボク にとって は何の 脅威 にもなら ない)
I quickly spun around and erased the attack with wind pressure.

“<ChiriSakura>”
(TL: Falling Sakura Blossoms)

Using a pinpoint attack I aimed at the center of his weapon and broke it with my fingers.

However his weapon began to melt into a viscous liquid.from where I attacked it.
(TL:しかし 、折られた部分 から 少しずつ 刀身 が実体 化する 。)
I wonder how many other <Vengeful Ghosts> exist…I'm still trying to figure out how to deal with them.

"It seems it'll be possible for me to die again."

"Why are you so concerned about fighting strong opponents?"

"I started to kill at a young age. My parents were killed before my eyes and everything else was snatched away except my urge to kill and kill and kill…Getting stronger and killing faster until I eventually died from a strong enemy. In the end, my reason to live was to kill until I am killed. Although I should have fulfilled my goal, I was still unsatisfied."

Zangiri quietly told us.
His quivering body stopped before I knew it.

"How many decades passed like that, I wonder…? I eventually was exhausted and ambushed."

I didn't interrupt him, I just leaned a little closer to hear what Zangiri had to say.
His story didn't really seem that interesting.
But you should never miss out on listening to a conversation.
Both of this guy's parents died. I caught that much from his tale.

"I revived instantly and slew the ones that killed me. I attacked with the intent to kill. Right at that moment…that was when I felt that I wanted to fight strong opponents."

After he was done talking, he once again readied his weapon.

"However, no matter how far I travelled in this world I never found what I desired. I gave up and rolled over, becoming that old guy's bodyguard. Young girl…no. What is your name?"

"Ryua."

"Ryua…use that longsword hanging on your waist. Show me that you can kill what I have become."

"Old man, you are fine with disappearing?"

"There will never be a more fitting way."

"…I understand"

I drew my sword.
Zangiri seemed satisfied.

I went at him with all my strength.

Zangiri was unable to react just like the last time I charged him.
I cut his corpse with all of my might.
Both his weapon and wavering body were cleanly cut.

“That much…strength…you…as I expected…could do it…”

He collapsed onto the floor and before long he had starting turned into light and slowly disappearing.

“…I will be fine you know”

“I wonder…about…that…”

As he muttered those final words, Zangiri completely vanished.

“I am…”

The regret I felt at <Bees Forest>.
It was a brief moment, but at that time I felt like I needed to be even stronger. I definitely thought that.
In that brief moment…maybe I was the same as Zangiri.
No…even 10 years ago when I was in the <Caves of Hell> I killed many enemies in my pursuit of strength.

Was that it?

Just so that I could defeated that one-winged demon?

Once again my head is getting fuzzy.

“Ryua-san…are you okay?”

Ai had been listening to Zangiri and I talk since the beginning and came over to me.

“Yes…let’s head back now.”

I extended my hand to Ai, though she paused for a bit before she took it.
I don’t understand why I feel anxious.
That can wait, I need to take Ai back to her sisters as soon as possible.
I want to see their smiling faces…

Oh, we turned Gametts over to the Kingdom’s security force, he was still out cold.
I have no idea what they did to him afterwards. I entrusted his fate to them.

/ / /

“Onee-chan!”

The 3 sisters embraced each other.

It seems Roel had been encouraging them all this time.

“Onee-chan you big idiot! Leaving the two of us to live on alone is overdoing things!”

“……please don’t go anymore.”

“I’m really sorry you two. but if I didn’t…”

The scene unfolding in front of us was radiant.
I, who was only able to escape by myself those 10 years ago, was able to save another person now.
Zangiri’s path…maybe pursuing power leads you to destruction.
Though that very power was what saved them this time.

“Ryua-chan…you are beyond strong, just like I thought.”

I think…Zangiri had too much power. He didn’t have anyone he could trust or rely on and was eventually swallowed by his strength.

“We all lose someone important eventually, but we’re never alone.”

“What was that?”

“It’s nothing.”

I once again looked upon the sisters who were beaming with happiness.
Their tear-stained faces were a thing of the past.
As I looked, I realized Ai was deeply lowering her head again.

“Ryua-san, our gratitude alone will never be enough to make up for all that you’ve done for us. I may not be able to do much, but if you are ever in trouble, I will lend you all of my power.”

“Me too! Me too!”

Mai was being energetic while Mi was silently bowing.
However, I had something I wanted to know.

“Will the three of you continue to be adventurers, even after all of this?”

“Yes. Thanks to you and Roel we truly understand what it means to be an adventurer. You don’t have to worry anymore.”

“Fufu” Ai laughed, I can’t feel any of the despair she had in that man’s room.
I’m a little worried about them, but didn’t their level rise quickly in one go?

“If something were to happen again, we will lend our strength to you. Please don’t do something rash by yourselves.”

“No problem~! Even though we’ve been relying on you thus far, we can’t keep going like that forever. My skill with this bow has risen quite a bit so we’ll be all right!”

“It seems that having your level rise doesn’t change much about your actual skill. Aude-san said that before.”

“Didn’t Aude hear that from Seigel? Oh! I wonder if he’s woken yet?”

“Let’s check when we return.”

The sisters said their farewells and we headed to the Heal Station.

“It’s been a long time since the three of us went, but let’s visit Father and Mother’s grave.”

I heard Ai’s gentle voice from behind me.
I wonder if AI will tell them the truth.
It seems she doesn’t have any intention to.
Though I think she will eventually.

/ / /

The room hadn’t changed since our last visit. Tube sticking out and covered in bandages, Siegel had his eyes closed.

“Just as I thought…he still hasn’t recovered.”

“Hey, Roel, is it forbidden to use your <Heal> on him?”

“I think a lot of people have already done that, and this Heal Station has a famous High Priest. I heard that person already used <Heal> on Siegel, so for me to do it…”

“But you still haven’t tried to do it?”

“Yeah, um…”

Roel used her gentle <Heal> on Siegel.
However, Siegel’s eyes stayed closed. There wasn’t any apparent change.

“Just as I thought, it won’t-”

Just as she gave up, Siegel’s fingers slightly moved.

“W-what? Just now, didn’t he move?”

“Eh? That can’t be…”

“Try healing him again!”

Roel used <Heal> on Seigel once again.

This time his eyelids moved a little.

"…ah"

His lips briefly moved.
He mustered all of his strength to leak out a faint voice.

"Seigel-san?"

"….is"

"Is he conscious!?"

"…-re is. this place is…"

Though his eyes stayed closed, his mouth was moving here and there.
Roel continued to heal Siegel in disbelief, trying to infuse him with life.
Before long, his eyes opened and he stared at the bright lights before him.

"…am I still alive?"

"Yes!"

"I see…"

"Should I call the staff here?"

"No, that's fine……more than that, please listen to me…About the Gametts Firm."

"I managed to do something about them."

Seigel was at a loss for a while.
The first time I met him, he gave off a feeling of overconfidence. But right now he has quite the woeful expression.
I spoke about what happened. Siegel only had one thing to say.

"Is that true? I wasn't able to do my job well…sorry…haha…"

"T-that's not true!"

"You don't need to be like that. I wasn't able to even hit that katana-wielding bastard on his hand or leg. Hey, Ryua, what are the <Roots> of your strength?"

"<Roots>?"

"Why are you so strong? What did you do?"

"That's because I fought in the <Caves of Hell>…"

If I say something about that place, will I regret it?

‘He won’t believe me anyways, so I don’t need to worry’ was what I was thinking.

“<Caves of Hell>…?”

“Just as I thought, you don’t believe me either.”

“No, I think I heard something like that somewhere.”

Siegel smiled, showing his white teeth. “Regardless, it’s fine” he said, and the topic was changed.

“I already delivered Gametts to the Kingdom’s security force,so it’s probably already the end for him. An investigation was started at their office and proof of their fraud was found. It’s not coming back.”

“With this, no one will have to cry anymore, right?”

“Ah, I wonder if that family is smiling now…I haven’t apologized properly to those people. I was unable to lend my assistance to them.”

“Aah! You’re up?!”

A boy was standing in the entrance to the room.
Behind him were his parents.

“Ojisan! You’re better now!”

“Not quite, haha…I still have to go through some more treatments.”

“Seigel-san, for you to end up like that for us…”

“If you want to say your thanks, direct it to this tomboy. I ended up getting the tables turned on me.”

As Seigel explained it to the parents, the family of 3 seemed to understand and said their words of gratitude to me.
Only the boy was looking at Siegel with a pleased face.
A staff member came by and saw Siegel was conscious and talking. He quickly ran over to him.

“Se-Segeil-san?”

“Yo, it appears that I was saved.”

“Hahahahahaha!” Siegel laughed more than he should have.
Before long the staff had gathered and an there was an uproar for a while.
It became a discussion of this and that related to his body, but Siegel was able to settle everything.

<Caves of Hell>.
It's not a lie that I fought in that place. Even Siegel didn't know about it.

I wonder why?
What is the danger level there?
What was my level now?
Seigel said that my strength was because of my <roots>.
Suddenly, things changed.

/ / /

In a dark basement made of stone.
Candles were lit and a single person was quietly sitting.
On the corroded table was a skull, it looked rather important. A person in a black robe was gently brushing it.

"Ah, it died."

Even though the person was alone, a grumble was heard.
The person inside the robes had black paint on their white body and a childish face.

"Zangiri, the killer from the east…even though I went through great pains to revive him, it seems he ended up doing nothing in the end."
(TL:「アズマの人斬りザンギリ。 せっかく、蘇らせてやったのに結局こいつ何もしてないでやんの」*)*

"Then, how about you make a subordinate with your own hands?"

There hadn't been anyone else in the basement a moment before, but now a middle-aged man wearing a hat was leaning on the wall.

"At least learn how to knock."

"Last time I did knock but nobody was here."

"Were you surprised?"

Robes was mocking the man.
As if replying to that, the man made a large cobra appear in his palm.

"Yeah, I was really surprised."

"Back off a little. What business do you have with me anyways?"

"At least be a little scared."

The man erased the the cobra in his hand.

"Anyways, it's about the status of the surprise attack we have planned for the festival. I was wondering if you've finished yet."

“If you are here for something useless like that, go home. Doing things this way has been quite irritating and I don’t have any good pieces left. Since it’s a big event I want to make sure it’s flashy.”

“Can’t you get the woman that hung herself at her mansion? Isn’t that a good specimen?”

“It was erased before I could get to it. It was probably an exorcist, but it’s the same troublesome fellow that’s been appearing everywhere.”

“How unexpected! I recently encountered the same fellow and my subordinate was easily killed.

Once again the man took out a large cobra from his palm as an example.

“Of course, since that’s a small fry monster.”

“No, seriously, it was a shock. I thought that I could do them in since it looked like they were just loitering in that dungeon.”

“Did you go there to play?”

“Those guys seem like they’ll be a hindrance. Especially that adventurer I tried to erase. How am I supposed to deal with that lady?”

“If you want to get rid of them just use a stronger monster…jeez I’m tired. I don’t have time for your comedy act, get out.”

“Don’t take too long. The festival starts soon.”

The capped man casually left the basement through the door.

“Fuun…noisy servant. Such an uncivilized beast master. I can’t stand seeing that guy’s stunts. Even so, the festival…”

A smile floated on the boy’s face and once again he caressed the skull.

“So, it’s really dead.”

The boy had an ecstatic expression on his face, his gaze was piercing the ceiling.

“Waaaah…I ‘m jealous…I’m jealous of a corpse…death is the ultimate beauty you know, when will I reach my goal…I wonder if there is a lovely girl being left to die somewhere? Mufu…muhihihihi…”

The boy held the skull in his arms and caressed it endlessly.

Monster Book

【Killer Tail HP:53】

It’s a scorpion. It weakens its prey using a poison needle and eats them.
It may look big, but pay attention to its long reach. Its speed isn’t as deadly as its range.
It’s not scary as an opponent to a prepared adventurer.
However, its dangerous if a group of them appears so being surrounded by them is really dangerous.

【Behemoth of Catastrophe HP:815】
The floor monster on the 4th Floor of <Avangard Cave>.
Its steel-like skin prevents blades from piercing, no matter where you hit it.
It attacks adventurers by charging with its large body.

【Wild Squirrel HP:24】
As a group, they frequently inflict serious damage to crops.
Its sharp fangs can even crush nuts.
Its breeding ability is very high, if you don’t completely exterminate them they will quickly multiply.

【<Plains Runner> HP:565】
A large tiger with a black and white fur pattern.
Its max speed is 300km/h when hunting game.
The jaw of this beast is strong enough to bite through a human instantly.
The only way to escape from this creature is to lure it away with food or use a comrade as bait.

【<Flying Squirrel of Gale> HP:34】
It watches adventurers from above, in the trees.
It attacks those that enter its range, and glides towards them to begin its assault.
Since it can use Wind Magic, beginner adventurers wouldn’t have an easy time dealing with it.

【<The Violent King of the Quiet Forest> HP:5046】
This monstrous bear has a physique many times larger than a Hellbear.
It won’t emit any noise as it assaults monsters and invaders in its forest, leaving them barely alive.
It’s said that this beast savors the first-rate fear the victims experience as it does this.

【<Violent Nectar Mother> HP:1211】
The Queen of the <Terror Bee>s.
It will rarely show its face, and as long as you don’t touch its nest it’s rather harmless.
However, if you do mess with the nest, the Queen’s fury will befall you without mercy.
The honey from this bee is one of the raw materials for high grade recovery medicine. Its stinger is also a priceless material for weapons, but only veteran adventurers can get it.

Full Text Arc 4

Here's arc 3 and 4 for you to read. We combined them since arc 3 was rather short.

Chapter 17 – Beginner Crusher Grundom

"Leave all of your equipment and belongings, and perhaps I'll spare your life."

A big guy who had to be at least 3 meters tall pinned down a party of C rank adventurers with only his fist.
The young sword fighter's skills wasn't much use, his party members were already at death's door.
The magician's spells weren't effective against the guy either.
The lives of the sword fighter's comrades were on the line, so the equipment was surrendered to the guy.

"Just be obedient and I'll make it as painless as possible…Come on, hurry it up."

The large guy violently threw the items and food on the ground.
The recovery items fell on the ground and the contents were spilled.

"There aren't any women in your party, I was looking forward to having a little fun with one.
All the members in your party are guys,
are you homo? Bring along a woman."

Being falsely accused like that, the young man stayed silent.
Even though the young man was an experienced fighter, nothing seemed to work on the guy.
For the first time since he was born, the young man met an overwhelming opponent and had no willpower to resist.

"Well, I already got what I need, here you go. Catch."

The large guy threw the bag up in the sky, hitting the face of the young man as it came down.
The young man didn't pick it up, he just stayed silent and looked down.

"You, stop being an adventurer. It's good that I'm being merciful, but if I was a monster you wouldn't have survived. They're merciless. How long have you been C rank?"

"……..half a year."

"Wwhaaa, half a year!"

The large guy was was more surprised than he should have been, and was holding his stomach while laughing out loud.

"Y-you don't have any talent at all! From D rank it takes half a month to rank up, right?

What kind of stupid things were you taking for quests, monster materials or crap? You're stupid, but you're suitable for odd jobs. You raised to C rank doing that, and have been there for half a year. Aren't you such an idiot. Hyahahahahahahahahah! kuku! hahahahahahaha!"

And again, the large guy laughed out loud.
The young man's frustration didn't spill out, he was desperately holding it all in.

"You don't have any talent. By the way, is that guy dead?"

After saying that the young man worked hard treating them.
Looking at the situation, the large guy was giggling and laughing.

/ / /

"Ryua-chan, are you done?"

"A-a little bit more!"

We have been inside the weapon shop for a while, I had trouble choosing this or that for 20 minutes.
I have 200 gold with me.
One is an iron sword which is 180 gold.
The other is a wing sword which is 150 gold.
The iron sword's sharpness is higher.
On the other hand, the wing sword can be swung faster.
If I pay 180 gold, the 20 gold left will all be spent on lunch.
The pocket money I have totals only 200 gold.
Roel is in charge of the money from the quests, but not the everyday living allowance.
I've been saving up till I had 200 gold.
The iron sword is sharper, in some cases that may decide a win or loss.
The wing sword is faster, I may be able to quickly save someone in a dire situation.
Which one should I buy…
I've been reaching out my hand for the item and then drawing back repeatedly.
The old guy at the counter was waiting with an expression that seemed to say "If you are going to buy do it quickly".

"Hey, Ryua-chan, I'm sure you had a sword right? Isn't it fine to not buy anything?"

"T-that sword has some kind of dangerous effect. Because it would be dangerous if Roel got caught up in it, I'd like to avoid using it as much as possible. That's why I'm looking into getting a normal sword for fighting."

That flash of annihilation. The explosion that swallowed up the <King of Destruction>. Its power is quite a menace to me.
I would look like an idiot if I accidentally invoked the weapon's effect and got caught up in the explosion, so I really need to make up my mind and decide.

"Ryua-chan, you're already strong to start with, isn't it fine regardless which you choose?"

“That’s not the problem you know…”

Roel doesn’t understand my plight. Whether good or bad, it’s just that one problem.
Even if I buy the iron sword, its power might not be as strong as I’m imagining. Same for the wing sword, its speed might not actually be that fast. My worrying won’t end.
I want to try testing them, but if I don’t test it in an actual battle then it’s useless.

“Hey, how about buying both.”

“No.”

It was an immediate reply. Roel is terribly strict towards money.
I wonder if it’s her methodical personality, she is really precise when she manages the household finances book.

“Mean…”

I showed Roel a crestfallen look , but it wasn’t effective.
I wasn’t able to trick her with my act.

“If you can deal with my quest then I can get you better weapons, just so you know.”

Unable to let things continue as they were, the old owner of the weapon shop suddenly suggested something.
If I take it, I can get a better weapon.
No matter what I have to do, I’m ready.

“As a matter of fact——-”

Just as the old guy was about to say something, the weapon shop’s door was quietly opened.
Putting the explanation on hold, the old guy said “Welcome” but that person said nothing and walked towards us.

“How much would all of these weapons go for? It’s fine no matter how much you buy them for.”

“Wouldn’t you be in trouble if you sell all these? You, are you that sword fighter?”

“It’s fine, I don’t need them anymore.”

sigh “Then…”

Without getting a proper explanation about the situation, the old guy started to trade.

“Ok, this is all.”

“Thank you”

After receiving the money, the man went outside quietly.
His figure from behind was hunched over and had no reliability to it at all, it was as if he would collapse at any time.

“That guy is probably feeling guilty. Failing a quest…every adventurer will experience that. We failed one in the past as well, Geneki was feeling pretty down at that time.”
*(TL:*オレも昔、現役だった頃はヘコんだもんさ*)*

“Geneki? Old man, you used to be an adventurer?

“Aah, how nostalgic…in those days there wasn’t anyone that didn’t know the name of Kozow.”

Kozow, the weapon shop owner, started to get earnestly immersed in remembering.
His hair is now mostly gone and his stomach is big, right now there isn’t even a shadow of his past.
(TL: 頭の 毛 は薄く なり 、下っ腹 はぽっこりと 出 ていて 今では その影 もない 。*)*

“Being an adventurer is like living in a dream. Once you become A ranked, depending on the quest you can handle, you can receive tens of thousands of gold. But of course there are setbacks and you have to deal with a lot things.”

“T-ten thousand…”

All I have is 200 gold, I wonder how small this is compared to that.
A rank…money is not why I want to become one but I’m getting more and more excited at the thought of becoming one.

“Oops, before i forget. About the matter earlier, if you want to know more I think the guild has the quest documents. Try looking for the name Kozow.”

In the end, Roel reached the limit of her patience and left the store buying the iron sword.
I thought that she was a docile person, but she has an unexpectedly strong personality at times like this.
I ended up finding a new side of Roel again.

/ / /

We went to the guild and the person we saw earlier at the weapon shop was here.
He was sitting at the counter facing Rintei who had a scrupulous expression.

“Are you really sure about this?”

“Mm, I don’t have any regrets.”

“In which case, I will do the legal process for deleting your adventurer registration. Once deleted, if you want to be an adventurer again you’ll have to start over at D rank. Well then, I will start the paperwork.”

Deleting the registration, is that person quitting being an adventurer?
I wonder if he went through something heart-breaking…I don't know if he did but if you look closely at he was clenching his teeth.
You can easily see his distress.

"I have nothing much to say, but you are safe so you don't need to get yourself too worked up. Beginner Crusher Grundom…we put out a quest for his extermination but there hasn't been any progress related to it, even now. Some C ranking people took it but they ended up coming back pretty beaten up. This town doesn't have many B rank adventurers to start with, and the ones we had left to do other quests. And Gantetsu-san has returned to the Avangard Kingdom castle town…However, if a B rank adventurer takes it they will immediately take him down. If that happens, someone like Grundom will not be here anymore. You're still young, so please don't give up yet."

"What do you know? If you have the spare time to meddle unnecessarily you should use that time to start the legal procedure."

The man looked like who was about to cry spat out those words.
I wonder if he experienced something really mortifying? He was clenching his hand into a fist and was trembling.
Beginner Crusher Grundom, I wonder what that person did to this man.

"Who's Beginner Crusher Grundom?"
"They say that he ambushes beginner adventurers when they go to dungeons."

I didn't know someone like that was here.
From the way Roel spoke, it seems that she doesn't know much about it either.

"Ok, the procedure is done."

The man who wasn't an adventurer anymore went out without saying anything.

"I feel bad for that person. If I hadn't met Ryua-chan…"

From the way it looks, it seems he's getting more depressed as time goes on.
He's like that because of Grundom.
I'm interested in taking the quest for his extermination, but I should do the quest for Kozow-san before that.
Together with Roel we searched for his quest.
Thanks to her teaching me the how to read letters, I can read a little bit of them. I still have a long way to go before I can read properly though.
Therefore, I'll leave it to Roel.

"There it is, this is it, right?"

[I want you to mine me some iron at the 4th floor of Avangard Cave.]
[Client: Weapon Shop IronMan Shopkeeper, Kozow]

“It’s the <Avangard Cave> from Pablo’s quest we did before, right?”

“That’s right, we went as far as the 2nd floor but now it’s the 4th floor.”

We were persistently warned to not go any further than 2nd floor because strong monsters loiter there, so we didn’t.
But I wonder what’s actually down there.
It seem the quest is for C ranks, I guess it’ll be fine.

“So to confirm, the quest from Kozow-san. And this time Ryua-san and Roel-san will take it. Right. I understand.”

It seems the way Rintei is talking right now is the usual way of talking to someone who is taking a quest.
It was written that we are going “to mine” but I actually don’t know what I have to do.
First of all, let’s go back to the weapon shop and hear the details for the quest.

/ / /

“That’s right, then here you go.”

Kozow gave us a mining set.
The danger level for the 2nd floor of Avangarde Cave is about 3, it seem at the lowest floor, the 5th floor, the danger level is generally about 8-10.
I wonder if that cobra came from the 3rd floor.
The monsters on the 2nd floor weren’t that big of a deal, and Roel’s level raised so I’m not that worried.

“On the 3rd floor there is a monster that can poison you, so be careful”

Following Kozow’s advice we prepared many antidotes to counter it.
Something like poison won’t affect me, and for Roel who is behind me I absolutely won’t let them touch her.
Right from the start I thought that we didn’t need any, but it’s better to have it and not need it than to need it and not have it.

“Well then, have a safe trip.”

“Yeah, take care.”

/ / /

Someone was looking at the town’s entrance from far away.
Two adventurers had just left Kwimill.
When the giant noticed that both of them were girls, his mouth warped into a grin.

“Oooh, it’s been a long time since a woman left town. I smell like piss…Oh well, that’s fine, so it’s time to play!”

The giant hiding in the woods stood up.
He would stand out too much in the plains, so it wasn't a good place to hide.
Grundom was merely lurking in the woods and silently observing the town's entrance.
There are a lot of beginner adventurers at Kwimill, so it was an ideal hunting ground for him.
Of course, he would stay hidden if the adventurers seemed skilled.
He plays it safe since he doesn't know how good they are.
Grundom looks for beginners because they're easy targets.
Really, just for this reason.

"From the packs those two are carrying, they're probably going to mine at the 4th floor of Avangard Cave. I'll be going ahead to ambush them, so I should take the shortcut. Kukukukukuku!"

Even though he a brawny type that was good for hunting, he also had quite the brain. He started planning his ambush…

Chapter 18 – Beginner Crusher Grundom 2

"Tei!"

A *Bonk* resounded as the <Cave Rabbit> was defeated.
Roel was able to hit and fatally injure a <Cave Rabbit>.
The first time I saw her do it was at level 2, so its natural she can do it now, but she seems more resolved. It's obviously different from before.
Compared to that dreadful ghost mansion, I wonder if it's because the is cute.
I think I get it.

"So, the 2nd floor isn't that scary anymore!"

We went onwards as Roel said that, as if celebrating something.
She was pretty happy. Behind me, I almost didn't notice a bat flying towards us.
I slapped it with my palm and watched it vanish, and I regained my attentive composure.
*(TL:*それ をボク が平手 で 叩い て 消し飛ば した のを見 て、ようやく 我 に返った。*)*

"Just like a bug…….Ryua-chan, you really are strong."

"Using my hand is easier since it's quite troublesome to keep drawing my sword……"

Returning to the room where Pablo had wanted us to get the spring water from, there was a small room just beyond it which lead down to the next floor.
And thus, we arrived at the 3rd floor.
If I remember correctly the quest's goods should be on the 4th floor.
It feels somewhat dusky here.
This time we're doing some mining for ore. It's probably because of people going in and out frequently, but there were lights on the walls which was a relief.

I was worried that the monsters here were going to be bothersome to beat.
Compared to the 2nd floor, the passageway here is very spacious so it would be easy to fight with monsters here.
Like on the 2nd floor, there were treasure boxes…but the items inside didn't change much.

"We just need to follow the light, this seems pretty straightforward."

"Yeah, but according to Kozow-san there are monsters that can poison us here, right…?"

【Killer Tail x3 appeared! HP:53】
A scorpion-like monster with a height up to about my waist appeared from inside the cave.
They pointed its tail at us, there seems to be a poisonous needle on the tail.
For 3 of these things to suddenly appear.
The lower floors sure are more severe.
And on top of its quick appearance, it has a long reach.
The scorpion didn't move from its spot, instead it extended its tail to stab me.
I drew my sword and bent down to evade, from there I swung my sword in an arc.
The tail was cleanly cut and fell on the ground.
Without any delay I bisected all of them.

【Ryua attacked! Killer Tail received 382991 damage!】
【Killer Tail was defeated HP 0/53】

Just as I thought, using the sword is better.
The sharpness of the iron sword is good…but the wing sword may have been faster to swing.
It's too late to worry about that, but when this quest is done Kozow said that I can get a better weapon.
I need to work hard.

"Amazing, amazing! If it was me I couldn't have dodged it."

Roel clapped.
The truth is I didn't need to dodge, but I really didn't like the needle so I ended up dodging.

"Just as I thought, we won't be needing the antidotes."

I thoroughly looked inside Roel's tool bag.
I thought antidotes would be good for an emergency, but I can probably handle hundreds of thousands of those <Killer Tail> monsters.
(TL: 万が一の備えと思っていたけどこれじゃ万どころか億だ)
After all, the danger level is just 10.

Advancing on, the passageways are so vast that there isn't really any forked pathways.
We arrived on the 4th floor without any difficulties. When we reached that place I sensed a strange presence.

"I wonder who's here?"

“Eh, there was an adventurer that went in before us?”

“I think it’s different than an adventurer.”

“D-different? Then who…?”

All I felt was a leaking bloodthirst. It’s different from the way a monsters does it.
No mistake, it was a human for sure.
I don’t what that person is planning, but if you are coming for us then I will stand against you.

【Killer Tail appeared! HP:53】
【Transforming Frog appeared! HP:65】

I was worried about the bloodthirst, so I didn’t spare any time worrying about those monsters. I just slashed them as I passed by.

On the way there was a treasure box, but it was already opened.
If I had to guess who took the treasure, it would be the person releasing the bloodthirst.
I pretended not to notice as we arrived at the mining location.
Using the mining set, we immediately started to work.

Behind us we heard a thundering roar and footsteps.
Thud with that heavy sound it stood before us.
Looking around, we were in a dead end of the mining spot. We were driven into a corner to confront the monster.

【Behemoth of Catastrophe appeared! HP:815】

It was a monster with a unique appearance. It had the body of a rhinoceros the head of an elephant.
To us this passageway felt wide, but to this monster it would be cramped.

“Floor monster…!”

Roel was speechless.
It was something Gantetsu taught us before while he was drunk: Floor Monster.
I don’t how strong this guy is, and from the start adventurers just end up being this guy’s prey.
I probably should’ve asked Gantetsu about this monster.
It’s certainly strong, but this monster seems very similar to something I fought on the 2nd floor of the <Caves of Hell>, they almost have the same appearance.
I’m worried this guy might suddenly start rampaging, I should quickly dispose of it before that happens.

As I thought that, it keeled over raising a thundering roar as fell down.
It didn’t twitch nor move, and behind the monster there was a big guy.
The big guy smiled as he waved his hand that defeated the monster.

“You girls, you’re saved”

I wouldn’t be as tall as this man even if I doubled my height, while thinking that the big guy approached us.
A smooth, shining head and thin moustache, the muscles of his body looks like they belonged on a monster.

“What are two girls like you doing this far in the dungeon? That was a pretty dangerous situation wasn’t it? From the 2nd floor onwards, adventurers who are over-confident in their skills challenge this guy and end up dying. Floor monsters are incomparably strong, don’t you agree?”

“Um, thank you very much for saving us.”

Roel lightly bowed and the big guy patted our heads.
He moved his hands down and touched our shoulders.

“Then, leave all of your stuff here. Compared to your lives, it’s cheap right?”

As I thought, it’s like that.
I understood immediately from his excessively confident expression and pressuring gentleness.

“T-hat is…wait a minute…”

“Wait a what now? Impossible, you don’t have anything to pay me back for saving you? Hmmm?”

“Is there any other way…?”

“Then, XXXX with this old man.”

“Eh, ah, what? What is that?”

There was a question mark floating above our heads. I haven’t heard of whatever he was suggesting, but at the same time I also don’t know anything about stuff like that.
Anyhow, I think this guy’s purpose was this from the start, I really don’t have to hold back.
I seized the hand on my left shoulder.

“Oooh? Something wrong?”
(TL:「お、お？　なんだなんだ？*)*」

My right hand looked like it belonged on a child compared to his hand, and the big guy just narrowed his mouth while watching me.
Then I exerted a little strength onto his wrist.

“O-oooowwwwwwwwwwwww!! A-a-agyaaaaaaaaaaah!!”

The guy was on his knees screaming, he was desperately trying to remove my hand.

I just let go of his hand and he unsteadily moved backwards.

“W-w-what was that?”

“What was what?” is what I want to reply. He was probably confused.

“For a kid to something like that to me, Grundom-sama?”

fuuu-fuuu he was blowing the hand that I seized earlier while looking my way.
Grundom, so this is the guy.
He was a good for nothing person, more so than I expected.

“So you are the <Beginner Crusher> Grundom. Why are you doing this?”

“Ho ho, so I’m not just a rumor anymore.”

“The guild person said that when the B class adventurers return they would immediately subjugate you.”

I glared at him who was staring at Roel with dirty eyes.
His sweat slowly stopped forming, and finally the the pain on his hand started to recede. Grundom released his hand.

“Ku ku, like I care!”

While saying that he simultaneously headed towards Roel.
He dashed at her, ignoring the fact that the cave floor was dangerous and protruding rocks littered the area.
(TL: 突起 などで 歩き にくい 洞窟 の 地面 など 物ともしない 慣れた 動き でダッシュし てくる。)
He planned to strike Roel with his log-like arm, but he was too slow.
I sighed and then jumped between him and Roel, stopping his arm with one hand.

“Ugh!”

He just doesn’t learn, huh? Forgetting what happened before, the hand he was so proud of was injured again.
Grundom was suffering as if he hit an iron pole.

“Once again, let’s hear it. Why are you doing this?”

“M-mind your own business!”

After all this happened, I’m not composed anymore and he was starting to get angry.
He was breathing heavily and was clenching his teeth.
Grundom once again tried to make a fist.
He attempted to do a flurry of straight punches with both of his fists, though this time he ignored Roel and went for me.
Left, right, back. I elegantly evaded them.

I evade to the left and his arm hits the air.
The wind from his punches made my hair slightly sway.
No matter how many times he swung at me, he wasn't even able to graze me. His face flushed like an octopus after he was done.

"Haaa, haaa haaa……..w-what the heck are you……."

"I won't lose to someone like you."

"Just what the heck are you!?"

He was barking words at me and simultaneously came at me with his whole body.
His punches won't work on me, let alone a tackle.
I stopped him with my right hand.
It was like he was running towards an invisible wall and hit it but his feet just kept going.
Being stopped, his body wasn't moving at all but his feet were still moving like an engine.

"OOAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!"

He did an angry roar like a beast, threatening me.
It was quite the ugly display. Without realizing his defeat or admitting he lost, he was desperately shouting.

"Bastard! Just what are you! Why is someone like you here in this shitty dungeon! Are you an A rank?!"

"Just recently I became C rank, you know."

"Don't lie to me!!"

"It wasn't a lie. Here, look."

I showed my Adventurer Card to Grundom.
What he saw written there was the truth, up until now he was angry but right now he was quiet.

"It's a lie……."

Grundom dropped his arms down in astonishment.
Roel was continuously holding on her staff.
I was dumbfounded by all of this, and furthermore he continued to show denial.

"No matter how many times I have to ask, I will. Why are you doing this?"

"J-just leave me alone!"

He was out of breath and was exhaling and inhaling raggedly while he continued to be stubborn.
Then he thought of an idea, he suddenly brandished the hands he had lowered before.

It's probably his trump card. It was just like my <Sonic Ripper>, tearing up the air while being terribly fast as it flew towards me.
I drew my sword and released a light <Sonic Ripper>.
Contact. Slowly, slowly, the force of both attacks were dispersed.
In the end, my attack negated his attack.
Though there was still some power left from my attack as it hit Grundom, and blood was gushing out.

"Gaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!"

Grundom collapsed onto the ground.

"Aha oops……"

Hearing the really painful groan Grundom was making, Roel rushed over.
Roel used <Heal> on him.
I wonder if the pain lessened, Grundom opened his mouth.

"U…ugh…ouch"

"…does it still hurt?"

"Ow…it hurts…"

"Please don't do something like this again."

"Damn it…damn it!"

After being healed, he was scornfully glaring at Roel.
Then tears came out from his eyes. For such a big adult to cry with some mucus coming out of his nose…
He was mad until now, but he was like a different person while crying.

"I……as I thought this is just my limit!"

"You should've listened to what Ryua-chan was saying earlier. Why are you doing such things?"

"I hated it you know…the difference in ranks. We started at the same time and yet that guy became an A rank. We both did the quests, and that guy ranked up to A. In the end I was completely left behind. As time passed, one by one those guys raised from C to B and I was completely passed over…I thought I had reached my limit. I failed the A rank examination and became eternally a B rank, wandering aimlessly. I cannot beat an A rank monster like those guys, and even the lower ranked guys eventually passed me. It was mortifying…I was miserable…and after some thinking, I started crushing beginners. Those guys were filled with hope, those beginners will achieve great things…I'm jealous of them."

It was as if I had cold water poured one me, listening to what Grundom talked about.

(TL: 決壊して流れ込んできた水のようにグルンドムは語る。*)*
I don't understand what Grundom felt, but I still scolded him.

"Even I was weak from the start. Even so, I didn't give up and made it this far. Even that old senile guy didn't stop me."
*(TL:*おじさんみたいに八つ当たりもしなかった」*)*

"…do you know about the Level Cap?"

"Level Cap?"

It was the first time I heard anything about that.

Chapter 19 – Beginner Crusher Grundom End

"Level Cap……..?"

Roel also doesn't know about it.

"When you return to the guild after finishing the quest, normally you measure your level. 'I'll never stop enjoying this moment'…I was also like that. But, what if one day your level stopped changing? One day it will come and no matter how many days you continue to fight after that, it won't change…that's when you've reached your level cap. Each person has a different level limit."

"Level……..limit"

I unintentionally murmured.
Each person has a different maximum limit.
I never considered that.
I don't know what my level is, however since I've made it this far I believed that anyone can become stronger as long as they keep working hard.

"My level continued to stay at Level 24…"

"B-but don't give up, continue fighting! Try to measure it again…"

"Metalika country"

Suddenly Grundom said the name of that country, I've heard about it from Roel before.

"Apparently they a have a machine that can measure your Level Cap. I couldn't take it anymore so I headed towards the country of Metalika. It was such an amazing country… there was an iron bracelet that shows your current level. It can also measure the level of other people…"

“Such a thing exists…”

I wanted to find out more, but what we’re talking about right now really isn’t useful nor what I originally wanted to hear. I don’t think he’s lying…I still have a lot to learn about this world and everything in it.

“You, whats your level?”

“I don’t know, no matter how many times I entered the iron box at the guild <OverFlow> comes out…”

“O-overflow you say…”

Grundom was making something like a sour face and shut his mouth.
No matter how many times I tried to measure my level each Iron Box did the same thing, so I eventually just stopped trying.
It never looked like it was actually broken, and if that’s the case my level…

“So your level is over 100. I can’t believe it…”

“Over level 100? Me?”

“It can’t be helped that Kwimill is in the sticks…however to reach a level over 100…such thing is already S rank, is what those guys said…”

I sort of expected this, my level being over 100.
Roel and the others are able to measure their level, whereas I’m never able to.
My Level is more than 100, so I wonder what my real level is.
I want to know…

“My wounds are mostly healed…thank you, miss.”

“Are you able to move right now?”

Roel quickly moved away from Grundom.
From what I see, it’s pretty obvious she doesn’t like him.

“You don’t have to worry, it’s fine, no matter what I do now. I…”

I deflected a knife that was flying at Grundom’s neck.
The knife rotated in the air and stuck into the cave wall.

“Hey…”

Being targeted by the knife, Grundom realized that his life was in jeopardy.

“Uhiiiiiii~…seriously?”

He lifted his pink glasses and pointed a finger towards me. He was a tall guy with slicked

back hair that turned spiky on the back of his head and he was wearing a very pink outfit. His sense of fashion hurt the eyes.

"You, rank D right? Seriously?"

He was confused while he was bending his waist back and forth.

"Y-you are…!"

"You went too far, Grundom-chan. Because it was so~ troubling to the village I went and accepted the subjugation quest, you see?"

"Why is an A rank like you in such a remote region?!"

A rank, is this guy is an adventurer?
This person came here on the subjugation quest for Grundom.
But I wonder if this Subjugation quest is to kill the person.
If it was a monster I would understand, but I won't kill a person.
The people in my village were killed by monster…those burning memories, those scenes come into my mind.
Skewered, killed, burned…life was stolen that day.
That tragedy is something I won't forget as long as I live. Will I…even be able to kill someone?

"I came here for something completely~ unrelated. Actually, Gantetsu should've also stopped by here for the same reason."

Gantetsu came here for the same reason as this fellow?
He didn't come here to subjugate the <Poison Salamander>, that much I understand.

"Nnnn, I wanted~ to do this quickly but I didn't expect for such a cute [girl] to block my attack."

He was moving his hips left and right while pointing his finger at me.

"Why are you going to kill this person?"

I finally got a grip on myself just as Roel opened her mouth.

"It's a subjugation quest, sweetie. Isn't normal to take his head? You girls are D rank? C rank? I really dunno what the normal rank is for this town."

"But killing a person…why…"

"Aaaa~ well, if there is a human resisting and being naughty then it's a subjugation quest. Capturing them is okay, but depending on the person and the quest it depends. Well whatever, I won't be capturing him~."

Kuku the person was laughing his head off, and suddenly he tried to go for the kill again.

It was the same thing that I deflected earlier, a knife with a short blade that he threw.
I deflected it exactly like before.

"Ooo~ooooo~oooo~? For such a low ranking [girl] like you? To me?"

"Stop it, even you won't win against that guy…"

When Grundom said that I did a 'Thumbs up' pose.
The guy's brows began to wrinkle, I saw a really amusing face.

"Can I consider this to be you hindering my subjugation?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"He isn't resisting anymore so there's no need to kill him."

"So just because he isn't resisting I'm not allowed to kill him~?"

He was laughing at me as if I was an idiot.

"If that's how you think, you'll definitely die someday."

After saying that he vanished from sight.
I wonder if he was under the impression that I couldn't win, I don't know if he was trying to convince me but for now the fight ended.

"Wa-haaaaaaaaaa, what was with that person?!"

With her patience exhausted, Roel took a deep breath and told him off.

"That guy is Xinbu, a superior A ranking adventurer. His class is Assassin. As you saw, that guy likes to mess around. He easily passed by me and became A ranked."

"Superior A rank……"

That person seemed to be indifferent to killing others.
Regardless of whether I become A ranked or not…I don't want to end up like him.

"I would have surrendered the moment he asked…for me to lose to a kid even using my full strength, I can't go on anymore. I'm so ashamed…"

After mining the items for the quest, we left the cave together with Grundom.
I kept and eye on him as we walked just in case he did something odd.
But Grundom was quiet from start to finish.
From what I see from his back, he had long since passed the age where he could dream optimistically. He was…a lonely adult.

/ / /

In front of a station soldier, Grundom stated his name, crime, and everything he did.
The soldiers looked at us and Grundom, they couldn't believe it at the beginning.

"It seems Grundom has been caught."

"I saw him being escorted to the Kingdom Castle town. The people who caught him were C rank adventurers…both of them were girls."

Inside the guild, rumors spread like wildfire. Adventurers all over the building were sneaking glances at us.

"Really, you guys caught him? Isn't that amazing!"

"No, you're probably just mistaken…"

We lied to people that came up to us. The murmurs floating around were laced with trash talk and jealousy.
Last time something like this happened, they didn't believe that I took down the <Poison Salamander>. But unlike before I was recognized a little bit which felt pretty good.
If I had done this quest earlier, maybe that guy wouldn't have quit being an Adventurer.
I can't stop thinking about it, but I understand.
I remember the the appearance of that guy being depressed, and Grundom who obediently surrendered while not being forgiven.

We gave the ore to Kozow, he was glad that we were safe.
The reward was precisely 1000G, and we also got the reward for subjugating Grundom.
Roel was jumping for joy about our finances since we received a lot of money.
Suddenly I thought 'If that's the case, I want my pocket money to be increased!'.

"That's right, I promised you something. This is the best weapon and the most expensive one in the shop. Here you go, the Mithril Sword."

It's lighter than the iron sword, and much sharper. I see, it's like a mix of the Iron and Wing swords.

"Thank you, Kozow-san. This is a really amazing sword!"

"HAHAHA! Isn't it? After all it's a mithril-made weapon. It's a very precious weapon, but thinking of it as a gift and leaving it in your hands is a small price to pay for it to be used by someone so amazing."

"Good for you, Ryua-chan!"

"I also have a present for you."

Kozow walked out from the back of his shop carrying a staff.

On the tip there was a mark drawn like a red flame.

“<Fire Rod>. It’s a staff that allows you to use flame magic.
It’s popular with priests like you who can’t use any magic attacks.
However, the strength depends on how much magical power you use on it.”

“I-Is it fine for me to accept something so valuable?”

“I didn’t really think about it, but you two were attacked not only by the floor monster but also Grundom. It was supposed to be an easy quest for you guys, with little danger involved. Setting Grundom aside, running into the floor monster was just completely unexpected.”

It seems Kozow was in a very generous and jolly mood.
He was initially surprised when we said that we had captured Grundom, but he immediately believed what we said and praised us.

“But please don’t be reckless. In the future, if you think things are getting too dangerous make sure you escape. No matter what you are there to do, your life is much more important.”

“Yes. Thank you, we will keep your advice in mind.”

After leaving the generously kind Kozow’s shop, we went to buy food for dinner.
The sun started to set not long after.
In the blink of an eye the day ended, and as I watched the sun I recalled my hardships.
Without knowing, I spent 10 years of my life in the <Caves of Hell>.
All I did was fight continuously day after day.
During that time I never thought about anything else. But comparing then to now, I would never go back to those kinds of days.
Especially since I have Roel with me.
Little by little it seems that her existence became irreplaceable to me.

“Yes? What is it?”

“I-It’s nothing.”

Without realizing, I had been looking at Roel.
I suddenly got embarrassed and turned my face away.

“Hey, I want to try and go to the Wizard Kingdom and Metalika someday, and possibly the Avangard Kingdom Castle town from before.”

“Yeah, someday let’s go. Together.”

Together…I thought a little about what that meant.
I wonder, if Grundom had a comrade with him would things have been a little different?
Walking together, helping the other when they’re weak…in the end the adventurer he once was is now nothing but a shadow of the past.

(TL: 共に歩めず、劣等感がつのり、最後には道を踏み外した冒険者の成れの果て。*)*
Just what is my level cap?
If my level stopped rising and Roel surpassed me…
Would she wait for me?
Would we still walk together?
Would I end up like Grundom?

"What? Just a while ago you were doing the same thing."

I hadn't realized I was once again staring at Roel.

"Hey, Roel…we will be together forever, right?"

"What are you on about? Of course we will."

"I'm glad…"

From the bottom of my heart I was relieved.
I want things to stay like this for a long as possible, even eternity.
Just like how the setting sun continued to burn without ever changing since the world was created.
Finally, the menu for dinner that I was starting to think about arrived.

Chapter 20 – The Circumstances of the 3 Sisters Part 1

[There are a lot of <Wild Squirrels> wolfing down our Poporu fruits so I want them to be exterminated. There's a vast amount of them so I'll need a lot of Adventurers to deal with this.]
[Koiwa Plantation]
(TL: アライリス*)*
The Poporu fruit. An exterior that looked like a peach with an interior giving off a sweet smell. A soft fruit, with a faintly sweet flavor reminiscent of a carbonated drink. This is what the Koiwa Plantation was growing.
The plantation at a glance was spacious; so much so that I couldn't tell how large this place actually was.
There really isn't a way for one person to cover this much ground.
Due to this, there are a lot of adventurers other than us working together to exterminate the monster called <Wild Squirrel>.

【Wild Squirrel x4 appeared!　HP:24】

【Ryua attacked! Damage Average:50119! Wild Squirrel x4 was defeated!　HP:0/24】

The monster itself is not a big deal.
Even the <Cave Rabbit> may be stronger than this, but these might be a bit difficult on adventurers who just started holding a sword.
The problem is in their numbers, just looking around the area there was over 30 of them.

It seems that their breeding ability is high so if you just leave them they will quickly multiply.
At first I was in high spirits and was hunting seriously but the remaining number is just too high, I'm tired of hunting them already.
Now that I think about it, this quest is for C ranks so the difficulty should be a bit higher than what we're used to.
I wonder why we ended up taking this quest…

"The plantation's production is suffering so the market price of this fruit is rising really high~!"

That's right, it was Roel.
Clearly her participation was influenced by her gluttony.
Besides the Poporu fruit we had also been shopping for strawberries and apples since they were her favorites. Her eyes sparkled whenever she saw those fruits.
The allure of fruit charmed me so I decided to participate even though the monster count was troublesome.
Of course, I could instantly take care of all the <Wild Squirrel>s.
If I used magic they would be wiped out. But the plantation would be obliterated as well. That idea was rejected.
Even though the easy way was rejected, I'm still serious about exterminating every one of them even if means running around the entire plantation.
(TL: しかし 、それ で なくても ボク が本気で 農園 を 駆け回れ ば そう 時間 はかから ない。*)*

"Ryua-chan, make sure not to defeat them all! There are beginner adventurers here too you know."

If she hadn't said that then I probably wouldn't have noticed.
For the beginners this is the perfect chance to level up. They won't just let someone steal their prey before their eyes.
Seems like I'll have to continue but hunt them slowly.

"Hii~!"

Inexperienced adventurers were carelessly surrounded and raised hysteric shouts.
'I'm not going to just let that happen!' I thought as I saved them.
Those squirrels were completely erased without a trace remaining. Brandishing my new sword, the adventurers were dumbfounded for a while but eventually said their thanks.

"Are you by chance Ryua-san? Waaah, she's smaller than I thought!"

I resumed my hunting pace when a party of 3 girls came to talk to me.
I wonder how they know my name?

"The rumors said that it was a girl that caught Grundom, it was nice to hear. Even though we are both girls, there's an amazing difference between us. We decided to work harder."

I see, it seems that the case of Grundom had spread more than I thought.
I wonder… it seems this D rank party of girls was looking at me as if I was a star of hope.

(TL: Dランクのこの女の子パーティには希望の星に見えたのだろう。*)*
These girls are still beginners at this.
Saying that, I'm still a C rank so I wonder if its fine to be pleased about receiving praise…it's not a bad feeling though.

Before I had realized it, the number of the squirrels had declined to near zero.
Everything was completed by the afternoon.
The head of of the Koiwa plantation was earnestly wiping of the sweat from his face with the towel while thanking us a lot of times.

"No, everyone we are truly thankful! It's thanks to you people that the crops weren't completely destroyed!"

All the staff of the plantation bowed their heads.

"So then, it's fine to take as much fruits as we want right?!"

The voice with no discretion belonged to Aude.
So this guy also participated…it would have been good if I had mistaken him as a squirrel. I might have killed him.
That dark thought instantly passed through my head.

"It's fine, it's fine, but of course there will be a limit to it. The only exception is that you absolutely must not take the fruits designated to be shipped for business."

Gulp

There were someone who swallowed their saliva.
…one of them was Roel.

Compared to during the hunt, the scenery right now is peaceful.
The adventurers had been swinging their swords in a frenzy to kill the squirrels, and now they're going nuts gathering fruits.
Before long, a questionable amount of fruit from the plantation had been eaten to the point of near exhaustion. I was curious about how Roel was eating them.

"Ryua-chan, aren't you going to eat?"

"Roel, first off you should really be eating the fruit with your right hand since it'd be easier to gather with your left."
(TL:「ロエルはまず右手に持っているぶどうを食べてから手を出したほうがいいよ」*)*

Even though I have already eaten plenty of it, this girl is still eating.

"Yo! Looks like you guys are doing fine!"

A noisy person came to talk to us.
Aude was swinging his basket of fruits with one hand and making a rude entrance while

approaching us.

"Well, I have also been working hard you know. I'm finally level 7. If I remember right you are at level 6, right? Well, work at it! Being a hard worker is the best way to achieve things."

"Yes, we will work hard."

Was she being honest or was she trying to deal with him? I don't know what Roel was trying to accomplish.
We had been passing the time nicely up until now, though normally you wouldn't think someone would stay here this late…I wonder what this guy is going to start yapping about?
When we had finished the ore mining quest she had leveled once again to 10.

"Ah, I wanted to see you! Ryua-san!"

The group of 3 girls from earlier found us.
They were carrying one basket of fruit.

"About the Grundom extermination, is it fine to ask about what happened?"

"Eh, it's fine, the subjugation or the ore excavation…"

"Should I tell you about my astonishing episodes? The 'Injured Person Rescuer' volume!"

"No need."

Aude received a cold reply.

"Roel and I are still only at C rank ourselves, is there really any difference between us?"

"There is a difference! We're still only D rank and at level 2. The whole time we were at <Avangard Cave>'s 2nd floor was really dangerous for us. When we were attacked by a group of bats we ended up using all of our recovery items…it was a boon for us when Ryua-san's party dealt with Grundom. If he was still there and found us…I wonder that we would have done…"

"I thought about giving up, but I really wanted to hear all about the exciting adventures that your party has gone on!"

Each of the girls were opening their mouths and praising us.
The girl with proper manners is Ai, the cheerful and energetic one is Mai, and finally the small one who hasn't talked yet is Mi. It seems they are sisters.
Their classes respectively are: Axe Fighter, Archer, and Healer.
One by one they introduced themselves.
For such a slender girl to carry a heavy axe….she might be overdoing it.
Now that I think of that, I took a glance at them while hunting and noticed that they couldn't hit the nimble <Wild Squirrel>.
I wonder why they couldn't…? Perhaps I shouldn't think about it?

*(TL:*何か 理由 がある の か、それとも何 も考え ていないのか 。*)*

“Mi-chan, you’re a healer right? Same as me!”

Roel gave off an air of familiarity when she spoke, but Mi ended up hiding behind her older sister.
I wonder if that’s a shyness suitable for her age…

“Since you’re aiming to be A rank, you’ll eventually have to challenge the A rank ‘Status-Up’ examination, right?

“‘Status-Up’ examination?”

“To become an A rank you have to take the ‘Status-Up’ examination that is held once every year. You need to pass it on your first try since you don’t get a second chance to take it. There are B rank Adventures receiving permission from the Guild every year, it seems that no less than 500 adventurers are gathered there.”

I heard something like that before…
Whenever the topic of that examination comes up, ‘Gene Machine’ comes out.
I think it’s a quest that can only be handled when you become an A rank.

“Since we are still just C rank this talk is a little premature.”

“That’s right but…I don’t want to take a test. I wonder why they would do something like that.”

“You will be recognized as an A rank by the Guild located in the Kingdom. Just that in itself is important you know.”

Mai made a dispirited face when she was told about that.
I wonder if I could pass it even if I can’t really perform well in regards to reading or writing.

“The examination every year is…hmmmm, what is it?”

Mai’s hand was being tugged and pulled by Mi.
To hear what she was saying, Mai leaned over.

“Ah, look at the time…Ryua-san, Roel-san, we have some urgent business so we will be leaving immediately. Sorry.”

“That’s right, we don’t enough time to play…”

The 3 sisters left the plantation in a haste.
From the speed they took off at, I guess it’s really urgent business.
It was like the peaceful mood we had earlier was a lie.

“Weren’t they such a weird bunch?”

“Yeah, but I hope those girls will continue to work hard.”

Today we went home carrying only a single basket full of Poporu fruit.

///Gantetsu’s POV+3rd person POV///

“Fu~~…that was tiring.”

While walking in one of the long corridors of the castle, Gantetsu was feeling tired.
That mysterious monster subjugation.
It’s more ferocious than it looks, even I who had piled up a lot of experience was played with.
I wonder how many monsters like that exist…?
I shouldn’t say this, but I don’t want to fight it again.
If I wasn’t an A rank I wouldn’t have been sent out to hunt it.
I wonder if it’s fine to think something like that…
I had many dreams in the past of being an adventurer and choosing this path.
(TL: かつて は多くの 夢を見 て 冒険者 の 道 を選ん だはず 。*)*
Am I just a convenient tool for the Kingdom now?

“That monster, I wonder where the heck it came from.”

“It’s fine to not think about it, you know~”

Before Gantetsu had noticed, Xinbu was behind his back.
Reflexively Gantetsu turned around.

“Are you going to end your life as a normal human~? Gantetsu-san~”
(TL:「今 の で一回人生終 わったっしょ 。ガン テツさん 」*)*

“Stop joking around.”

“Temporarily stopping work as an A rank, such a thing is unforgivable Gantestu-san~, but the other day at Kwinmill you apparently did something~?”

“What are you trying to say?”

“It was a result born from a single person. It usually takes 5 people to something like that in this field. Despite that, what did you do? You did something like exterminating a <Poison Salamander> during your free time?”

“That was something urgent. I couldn’t just ignore it.”

Suddenly the distance between Gantestu and Xinbu shrunk, and Xinbu lightly grasped Gantestu’s chin to lift it.
It was as if Xinbu didn’t notice Gantestu glaring at him while he was stroking his chin.

“So…are you saying all that I need to do is show my true ability?”

The eyes inside the gaudy glasses shone followed by Gantetsu groaning.

"Then I'll go and finish 3 things~. How about yourself, how many will you do? Aren't you an A rank? Or is this your way of saying you're getting old~?"

"S-sorry…"

"You should already retire as a soldier~"

Just as Xinbu said, at Kwimill I wasn't able to produce many results.
But, it's true that I can't let the <Poison Salamander> incident slide.
Originally, I should've been an adventurer.
Yet my country is working me hard.
This Xinbu is a genius. In just one year after he started as an adventurer he passed the A rank 'Status-Up' examination, and just like that he joined the elites.
Since I was young, I steadily made up my way until I grew into this miserable state.
It's not only that, Xinbu also likes to say whatever he wants and I'm not able to refute it.
I don't want to feel inferior, but I know I can't win against that man.
My heart has long since admitted its defeat.

"There was that time I had to retrieve the head chief, he was an old man like yourself."
(TL:「あとの 一匹 はあの 顔 長兵 士長 が回収し たみ たいっしょ 。対し て ジジイ は」*)*

When Xinbu had finished talking, Gantetsu returned to walking.
Xinbu was looking at his back as he walked off.

"I'm such a miserable A rank…"

After Gantetsu walked far enough, the pink man let out his finger and then once again disappeared from the corridor.

Chapter 21 – The Circumstances of the 3 Sisters Part 2

We found ourselves at the <Strange Plains> where we had fought the <Poison Salamander>.
We came here after accepting a quest from the Tool Shop to gather materials, I hadn't realized how large the plains were.
I think someone could get lost in here and never find their way out…
Even though the danger level is 6, the sheer size alone looks like it would be enough to finish you.
There were certain flowers that only bloomed here.
We came here to collect drug ingredients. The Tool Shop seems to hire adventurers for this quest every time the flowers bloom.
I know how many we need to gather, but the amount is rather large.

【Man-Eating Flower appeared! HP:44】

In addition to that, unneeded flowers come by every so often.
Although it eats people, why does it bloom at such a remote place…?
'It's going to be burned by Roel', and as soon as I thought that, the monster caught fire.

【Roel used Fire Rod!】
【Man-Eating Flower received 233 damage!】
【Man-Eating Flower was defeated!　HP:0/44】

"Roel, amazing…"

When we stopped by the weapon shop yesterday, we had asked Kozow about the Fire Rod and from what he said it seems the flame effect is only a low grade magic. The monsters shouldn't be defeated by a low grade magic though, even if it is exploiting a weakness…but Roel was still mercilessly burning the monsters.

"It's because these monsters are really weak to fire."

Roel said that, but there isn't even an ash left where the monster burned.
Because she's controlling her magic so well, I think she just has naturally high magic power.
As we left the scene of the crime Roel was happily humming a song.
For a girl to sing after burning something so mercilessly…is a unique scene.
Though I can't speak, pot calling the kettle black.

"Hey, isn't there a lot of flowers that way? Let's gather over there.

"We can gather flowers while taking care of the monsters."

Saying those words, Roel was tightly holding onto her Fire Rod and anxiously waiting for a monster to appear.
I unexpectedly saw her make an aggressive face…I shouldn't tease her too much.

"Ok, is this much fine? Adding Roel's amount to mine, we have quite a bit."

"I can't carry any more than this. Cynthia-chan from the Tool Shop will surely be pleased with this much."

"T-that is!"

In the distance I saw 3 adventurers fighting a Tiger-like monster.
It was the 3 sisters.
As the tiger got close, I realized I hadn't seen it yet. It's probably a floor monster.
If that the case, it's not an opponent that those 3 can take on.

【<Plains Runner> appeared! HP:565】
*(TL:*草原を疾駆する者*)*

"Tsuuuu!"

【Ai attacked! <Plains Runner> quickly evaded!】

The large tiger evaded Ai's large axe and didn't miss the chance presented by her backswing.
The beast attacked Ai with its sharp fangs.

【Mai fired Double shot! <Plains Runner> quickly evaded!】

Ai approached the <Plains Runner> and aimed at it while Mai released arrows towards its face, but the attacks ended up being evaded and made a dry sound as they hit the ground.
The <Plains Runner> changed its target to the one who was releasing the arrows.

"W-what should we do!? How can we win against this!?"

Mai was shouting and lost her composure. The <Plains Runner> ignored her yelling and rushed at her with a speed she couldn't react to.
Just as it began to bite Mai's head off it realized something was wrong with its body.
The <Plains Runner> had been cut into two, and it gushed blood as it collapsed onto the ground.

【Ryua fired Sonic Ripper!】
【<Plains Runner> received 224028 damage!】
【<Plains Runner> was defeated! HP:0/565】

"Good thing I made it in time."

I'm glad I hit the monster from that distance.
Mai fell to the ground as her strength left her.

"Ryua-san! For you to come to our aid…"

Ai rushed over to me full of thanks but out of breath.
It seems the youngest one, Mi, was really scared. She was just sitting on the ground.

"That monster is a floor monster right?"

"Yes, if Ryua-san hadn't come to help us, we would have been in trouble…"

"You're unbelievably strong…Ryua-san, just what are you…?"

Mai was surprised when she looked at the corpse of the tiger that had been cut in two.

"Are the 3 of you here for a quest?"

"Yes, we came here for the flowers that the Tool Shop wanted."

"Really? We're doing the same quest then. So, did you find some?"

"We got a fair amount…hey, for you two to gather that much, just as I thought you're really amazing…"

Taking a quick look around, there doesn't seem to be much left we could gather.
I don't know if it was that monster's fault, but these girls seem to be having a really difficult time.

///

After we went to the guild to deliver the items and settle the quest, the 3 sisters invited us to their house as a thank you for saving them.
We walked through the streetways of Kwimill for a while until we reached a one-story house made of bricks.
It seems a little large for just the 3 sisters to live in.

"Sorry, it's not much but…"

As she said that, we were presented with Poporu juice and a pancake as dessert for later.
I was entranced by the sweetness of this juice, I didn't expect it to be this delicious.
Roel looks like she wanted to ask for another one, but it seem she still she has some restraint.

"Ryua-san, why are you so strong? I can't believe that you are just a C rank."

"Mm, I wonder why?"

It's because I trained at the <Caves of Hell>. I wonder if I should tell them about it?
Tolppo believed my story easily, but I wonder if these girls will as well?

"My mother thought I would achieve great things and gave me her bow, but it seems I'm not that good with it."

"As for me, my father gave me his axe…but the size is absurd. This is too big for a woman to swing comfortably."

I heard "Teehee" come from the mouths of those 2, it seems they were bashful.
It seems the youngest is done mulling over what had happened. She unsteadily approached Roel and I.
(TL: 末っ子は失禁の処理を終えたのか、ひょこひょことボク達のところへ来る。*)*

"……thank you."

She bowed and quickly retreated behind her sisters who were sitting on their chairs and completely hid herself.
I think that a child being an adventurer is just unreasonable…
Are her older sisters okay with her going through the scary situations an adventurer faces?
Well, I say that but I was even younger than her when I was surviving in the <Caves of Hell>…
At that time I was…huh? I wonder what I did back then.
I…wonder why I can't even remember a little bit about when I was that young?

"That was delicious! Thanks for the meal!"

“You’re welcome. Even though you are the ones that saves our lives, this is all we can do for you. Sorry…”

“I didn’t save you for this, so don’t worry about it. Though, why did the 3 of you become adventurers?”

“OOOOOOIIII!”

Suddenly we heard an angry yell from outside.
I realized that the 3 girls had frozen expressions on their faces.

“This months quota, are you able to pay it?”

“Onee-chan…”

Mai was looking to Ai for help, but Ai was calm.
No, that’s wrong. She probably just appears like that on the outside.
Ai thought about something for a short while and then slowly opened the door.
Outside was a middle aged man with a white writing brush-like beard and several armed men.
Next to Brushbeard stood an expressionless guy with a slender sword.
I was thinking about how much you would need to bend the slender sword to break it…
I was excited by the sword since it was really interesting to look at, but I should be focusing on the situation right now.

“Oh! Oh! Since you’re here, quickly come out and pay. I came here to receive this month’s quota.”

“…Yes.”

“Oooh, well done, well done!…Hmmm? Oh my, oh my! It’s not enough!”

“We’ll definitely pay the rest to you soon.”

“It’s a quota, you know? I understand that you’re having a hard time with your livelihood, but there is a agreement.”

“We’re sorry.”

“Is there anything left from when your parents were alive? You need to take this more seriously…well, doesn’t look there is any other way.”
(TL: あなた達のご両親が生前、残したものですよ。*)*

Brushbeard stroked his beard while eyeing the 3 sisters like he was licking them.

“Since you can’t pay with money, it’ll have to be with your body.”

“T-that is…”

“If you won’t offer yourself, it’s fine if one of your sisters will.”

“Somehow! We will somehow pay it! Please let us go just this time!”

“Fuuun, no matter how many times you say ‘Just this time’”

Ai was frantically lowering her head.
The other sisters were silently watching what was happening.

“I may look like this, but in business we need to be precise and punctual when dealing with one another. A deadline is a deadline, and if we don’t keep it then we will lose the respect that people have towards us. That much should be obvious, do I even need to explain this to you?”

“Yes, it’s just as you said…”

“Well, I’m not a demon. Just this time, I will wait for 5 extra days. Farewell.”

Brushbeard lead the bad looking men away and they left as a group.

“Will we be able to manage within the 5 days?”

“Yes, somehow.”

“Those people just now, they’re part of the Gametts Firm right? Could you girls possibly…?”

Roel wore a face showing she wanted an answer as she asked that.
I wonder what the Gametts Firm is?

“That’s right. When our parents died, we borrowed some money. Since we didn’t borrow too much the monthly payment quota is manageable, thankfully.”

Mai was worried about Ai and showed confusion as she tried to follow the conversation.
It’s not impossible she said, but she wasn’t even able to pay the quota just now.

“Did you girls become adventurers because of that?”

“Yes, you’re correct. Since our parents are no longer here we decided to cooperate to live. We tried other jobs unsuccessfully since not many places could employ us, so we eventually gave up and became adventurers.”

Their parents are no longer alive….
I know how hard it is to live alone as a child.
Having no one to rely on or confide in is more severe than you can imagine.

“But taking on that tiger was insane. It may have been a floor monster…even I got worried when I saw you.”

“We thought about getting strong quickly to get high paying quests…sorry for troubling you.”

“When we measured our levels today, we thought we could manage it as level 3’s.”

The danger level alone is 6, trying to take it on at level 3 is suicide.
If this goes on, these girls might really die someday.
Anyways, I can’t forgive the bearded guy.

“So how much money did you borrow?”

“About 2 million gold…”

“Two million!?”

Roel was shocked as she repeated that number, and I caught her as she fell.
2 million…even we wouldn’t be able to pay that off.
But that threat from earlier was too extreme for that amount of money.
(TL: でもいくら借りたお金とはいえ、さっきのはあんまりだ。*)*

“If the money was paid off, that guy won’t be complaining anymore right?”

“Yes, if we pay this month’s quota and then pay off the rest they will…”

“Roel, they’re in need of help.”

“Yes, you’re right…it’s fine to ask us if there is something we can do to help…Ah, that’s right! How about forming a party with us? Hey, Ryua-chan, it’s fine right?”

“Y-yes?”

“We will support you to the best of our ability. So, will you let us help you?”

“B-but…”

So it’s like that. Such a simple answer.
Even though these girls are inexperienced, if we support them then their skills will improve and they will grow stronger.
They’ll also be able to pay their debt off at the same time, so it’s like killing two birds with one stone.

“It’s fine. Since it’s something we can do to help, we’ll do it”

“Onee-chan, isn’t it fine to depend on them? Honestly, if it’s just us like earlier…we weren’t able to do it.”

“…Then, can you please help us out?”

“For sure!”

We ended up answering in an unusually tense tone for some reason.
Now that we’re a large party of 5, what quest should we take?

Chapter 22 – The Circumstances of the 3 Sisters Part 3

"T-that person! Could he possibly be Seigel-san the Dragon Hunter?!"

As we were finishing the settling of our quest at the counter, Roel had suddenly pointed her finger at a silver-haired man.
His weapon was really unusual, it was a gigantic blade. I never even thought of a weapon like that.

"Cutie-pie did you just call me…? Woah?!"

Seigel pointed at us while doing an exaggerated pose.
'Cutie-pie'? I don't understand what that means but I think it's a word that only this person would use.

"Oou! 5 cuties?! Are you all by any chance my fans?! What do I do? I want to give you my signature but there doesn't seem to be any time for you to get some paper…so then, how about letting me write it on your weapons?"

"No, its fine"

Seigel who was rambling on and on was completely stopped by that short phrase from Ai.
A no is definitely a no, the reliable older sister clearly said it.
I think its reassuring for the 2 younger sisters.

"You're the dragon hunter Seigel, right? I didn't think that you would be here at Kwimill."

"Roel, is this person famous?"

"Of course he's famous. He holds the position of one of the top 3 adventurers! There was an article where he was interviewed by the Dungeon Diving Rascals Magazine, you know. It's impossible for him not to be well known. When he trekked through the Giginja dungeon with a danger level of 60, he was the first in the world able to defeat the <Volcanic Dawn Dragon> alone."
(TL: my first try of the name was "Explosive Flame Dragon" but when i talked with it with my ED it turned into Volcanic Dawn Dragon if you have any better name for this this is its jp name 暁の爆炎竜) (ED: Explosive Flame = Volcano, and Dawn was in the name. Seems straight forward to me :I)

I wonder if Roel is a fan of this person?
At any rate, it seems he really is famous…but he's way too overconfident a person.

"So~ what quest are you cuties going to take together? Aaaah, I'd like to teach you a lot of things but unfortunately I have other plans. I'm really sorry, please don't feel bad."

“We won’t need that. Ryua-san, Roel-san. How about this quest?”

Seigel was cruelly ignored by Ai and hung his head while she was pretending to continue as usual.
The quest was:
[I want you to collect honey from the <Terror Bee>s in the <Bees Forest>]
[Client: Tool shop Cynthia]
[Reward: 1100G + extra for more honey]

“The <Bees Forest> and <Bear Forest> are related forests, right…? But I’m sure its Danger level is 5…”

“I know that we’re aiming a little too high, but we want to get stronger quickly.”

“I understand, leave it to me.”

By no means was this a promise with no consideration to it. I’m serious about wanting to lend my power to them. Helping them is what I want to do.

“A <Terror Bee> huh…I wonder if I’ll be able to hit them with my arrows?”

Mai looks like she was insecure about the bow and arrows she was carrying.
Mi was cheering Mai on by patting her lower back with her small hand.

“That’s right…mom and dad aren’t here anymore so we promised that we’ll do our best.”

Mi did a strong, encouraging nod.
Her short and fluffy chestnut-colored hair was bouncing as she nodded.
Mai’s waist-length hair was moving in harmony with Mi.
The 3 of them combining their strengths to persists and live on…it’s rather praiseworthy. Seeing them like this makes me want to help them more and more.

“<Bees Forest>! The <Terror Bee> on its own is not a big deal but be careful of swarms. You really need to be careful. The floor monster is called <Violent Nectar Mother>, and it will require extra attention to deal with. You can consider this monster to be the queen of the <Terror Bee>s, it’s rarely seen but if by chance you encounter it, retreat. It’s not something that you girls should fight.”

“Thank you very much.”

“No, I’ll accept your thanks once you come back alive. Just like how it was at Zenbei.”

“Ryua-san, Roel-san. If you’re prepared, should we go?”

The lively and energetic Ai lead us.
I pitied Siegel just a little bit.

///

It's shallower than <Bear Forest>, it would be more fitting to call this place <Bee's forest>.
But I don't think I'd even call it a forest. <Bee's Woods> is more appropriate.
The monsters living here aren't only <Terror Bees> though.

【<Flying Squirrel of Gale> x2 appeared!　HP:34】

Suddenly a flying squirrel came down from a tree.
While it was gliding it fired wind magic at us.

【<Flying Squirrel of Gale> cast Wind Cutter!】

One of the wind blades flew at Mai.
I wouldn't let something like that reach her so I erased it with wind pressure from one of my hands.

"T-t-thank you……"

"I'll absolutely protect you, so calm down and properly aim."

"Yeah!"

Mai took a deep breath and took aim at the <Flying Squirrel> that was gliding from tree to tree.
When the <Flying Squirrel> stopped she released her arrow.

【Mai attacked! <Flying Squirrel of Gale> received 25 damage! HP:9/34】

The arrow was sticking out of the monster as it fell from the tree. Ai struck at it with her axe, not showing any mercy.

【Ai Attacked! <Flying Squirrel of Gale> received 52 damage!】
【<Flying Squirrel of Gale> was defeated! HP:0/34】
"W-we did it!"

"There are still some left! Don't relax yet!"

Just as those words were spoken, one of the <Flying Squirrel>s retaliated and charged at Ai.

【<Flying Squirrel of Gale> attacked! Ai received 11 damage! HP:20/31】

"Ugh!"

It was tunnel visioning on Ai who had fallen down and started to chant wind magic.
I shouldn't let her be in such a defenseless state any longer. I drove away the squirrel and quickly slashed it to defeat it.

"Mi-chan, please use recovery magic on your sister."

Roel gently urged Mi who was getting flustered.

Using both of her small hands she cast <Heal> on Ai.

"Yeah, you did a good job."

Mi blushed when she heard Roel praising her.

"Thank you…Mi from the start was a shy child, so how…"

"Children tend to get flustered much faster since they don't know what to do. But Mi-chan, you need to make sure that your sisters can hear your voice, okay? Don't feel shy and just say what you need to say."

"……yes."

Her voice was as quiet as a mouse.
Using all her strength she had shown her determination to us.
Roel was somehow able to handle this shy little girl.

"Thank you very much. Sorry for the trouble…"

Ai stabbed her axe into the ground and her posture faltered.
She was sighing as she was apologizing.

"In combat, you need to stay calm and not be careless. I want you to understand that."

"Okay."

They seemed to be encouraged by those words, and if these 3 follow our advice when they fight…I don't think we'll need the recovery items.
There are many nimble monsters that Ai's axe won't be able to hit easily, like those squirrels.
I'm not going to suggest she stops being an Axe fighter, but we need to find a way to utilize her strengths effectively.

We advanced by pushing through the plants until we encountered a group of bees as big as a human head.
There was something dangling from a nearby tree…if I'm not mistaken that would be the nest of the <Terror Bees>.
We finally reached our goal, but the number of opponents is…

"T-those are <Terror Bee>s? So many…"

Mai swallowed hard.
I was curious as to why the honey had such a high price. It seems it's because of this.
There's probably a trick to gathering the honey but I don't have the patience to think about it.
I recklessly charged the beehive.

【Terror Bee x20 appeared ! HP:36】

The bees came at me all at once.
The countless stingers that came to stab me looked identical to the scorpion's tail from the cave…I'm not willing to get stung.
The bees rotated around me to cut me off from the group.
(TL: ボクは回転しながら周囲のハチを斬り捨てる。*)*
I don't feel even the tiniest bit of fear as they surrounded me and tried to pierce my skin. I cut them all down and some scattered to pieces as they fell.

【Terror Bee x17 was defeated!】

Mere seconds had passed since the fight started, and only 3 were left of the initial swarm.
I wonder how many bees the girls can handle…
It can poison whoever it stings, but maybe like the squirrel from the plantation they might be easy to deal with in very small numbers.

"Hey, it's your turn now!"

"Fuei?! Ah, yes!"

Ai was surprised by my sudden order, but prepared her axe and ran toward the remaining bees with a determined look in her eye.

"Don't just swing randomly! Aim at them when they're in range as they come to sting you."

Ai silently nodded and seriously focused on the bee as it approached.
The <Terror Bee> moved here and there, circling around as it prepared to attack, and at the last moment as it flew at Ai, she brought down her axe.
Ai only grazed the bee and it counter-attacked Ai who left herself open.
An arrow pierced the <Terror Bee> as it flew at her.

【Mai Attacked! <Terror Bee> received 36 damage!】
【<Terror Bee> was defeated! HP:0/36】

Ai was amazed that Mai was able to bring down the bee with her bow.
Their party is simple, but very well matched.
Only 2 bees were left, and one of them flew at Mai.

"Hiii! I-It's coming this way!"

"Ai-san! Now!"

The <Terror Bee> didn't notice Ai who had been slowly closing in behind it, and Ai swung in a straight line.
The bee was magnificently cut into two parts.
Immediately after that the remaining bee stung Ai from behind.

【Terror Bee Attacked! Ai received 6 damage!】
【Ai is poisoned! HP:25/31】

“Ah……..”

Ai began to stumble due to the poison.
This time it’s Mi’s turn to shine.
…is what I thought, but she still hasn’t learned any antidote magic.

“YOUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU!”

Mai shot an arrow at the bee out of desperation.
Honestly, that shot was better than her previous one.
The bee wouldn’t have died from a single arrow, but this is the one that had been injured earlier and Mai had landed a direct hit this time.

【Terror Bee was defeated! HP:0/36】

“W-won…we won…”

Feeling weak, Mai sat on the ground.
Ai was out of breath and staring at the corpse of the bee.

“You two are stronger than I thought…if it’s like this I think you can probably handle the 2nd floor.”

“It was thanks to you, Ryua-san. If it wasn’t for your precise instructions we wouldn’t have defeated them.”

“That’s true…I was really surprised. Ryua-san, why are you a C rank with such amazing skills?”

“I’ve only been an adventurer for a short while…”

Rather than explaining everything I just gave a vague answer.
(TL: 説明するには長すぎる経緯なのもあって曖昧な返答になってしまった。*)*

“Ryua, I’m not really in any position to say this but I think you would’ve already become an A rank if you weren’t paired with me.”

“That isn’t true, you know. I need you with me, Roel. I’ve been saved by you a lot. You’ve also been levelling up at a quick pace recently.”

Everything I said was the truth. Especially about her levelling, I’m really surprised by how fast she’s grown from level 2 to 10.
I think she was supposed to be like that from the start.

“Ryua-chan…”

I’m not sure if she’s happy or embarrassed, but Roel was smiling while looking down.

“Roel-san is already at Level 10…We will also need to work hard.”

Ai stirred and Mai was grasping her Bow tightly.
Mi is…hmm? Mi is?

“Hey, where’s Mi?”

As I said that, the atmosphere froze.

///

“Oh? Boy, what are you doing here?”

Seigel spoke to a child who was crying on the roadside.
The child was crying so hard he wasn’t able to talk well.

“Did someone make you cry?”

Seigel knelt down so that they would see eye to eye.
It seemed to give the child peace of mind and he started to talk.

“Papa are Mama were at home, then scary people came…my home…breaking…many things…*hic*…*hic*”

“Scary people…”

Seigel thought about what he heard for a brief moment and then stroked the child’s head.

“Boy, this Onii-san will save you. Onii-san may look like this but I am an A rank adventurer. That means I’m unbelievably strong, you know.”

Now, there are S rank monsters in existence, but Siegel planned on suppressing them one by one.

“Really? Ojisan will?”

“Ah, Onii-san will absolutely save you.”

Siegel was stubbornly emphasizing the “Onii-san” part.
The child lead Siegel to his house. Calling this place destroyed was putting it lightly, the house would be better described as completely demolished.
The walls were in small pieces without any connection to the neighbouring rooms. The pieces were numerous and very spread out.
(TL: 壁がこま切れになり、床や壁も関係なくいくつにもバラバラにされている。)
Strangely enough there wasn’t any furniture.
Seeing both the first floor and the 2nd floor, the house was really in a miserable state.
I think that’s the entrance? Approaching what was left of the door were the child’s parents, tears falling down their faces.

“Can you tell me just what in the world happened here?”

"It's already the end…everyone we had is now completely gone. Our home was the last thing we could cling on to, but this time it was taken from us as well…"

Siegel wasn't able to get the reason from them but he was able to make a guess.
He understood that this wasn't just a normal robbery.

"Is it possibly…debt?"

"W-why do you care!?"

As one would expect, these people weren't in a state to talk properly after having something like this happen to them.
Giving up on having them tell him, he decided to pry it out of them himself.

"Gametts Firm."

Just that one word made both the parents flinch and tremble.
Gametts Firm was just recently started up by a guy named Gametts, it's a rather corrupt company.
It had gathered capable adventurers, had strict security, and was based here in the sticks.

"Be at ease. I will settle all of this. Just be patient."

"Ha…?"

'The crying face of a mother isn't beautiful'.
That secret thought from Siegel had no relation to his decision. He ran towards the Gametts Firm.

Chapter 23 – The Circumstances of the 3 Sisters Part 4

"Is Ryua-san going to be fine?"

"It's Ryua-chan, even she would be fine at <Bear Forest>. Just relax and wait patiently."

///

I rushed around the forest at the fastest speed I could muster, searching for Mi.
I've been yelling out her name but there hasn't been any reply.
I had searched the entire <Bees Forest> but was unable to find her.
It may have turned into a worst-case scenario where we wandered into the <Bear Forest>… since it's directly next to this forest it's not an impossibility.
<Bear Forest> and <Bees Forest>…the <Bear Forest> is a deeper forest than this one.
Since tall trees grow there, the deep forest is just like a jungle.
I had passed through the <Bear Forest> once before.

My trek from the <Caves of Hell> to Kwimill had me run through it.
Back then I hadn't know that place had such a name.
This place…it would be apt to say it had a dark atmosphere to it.
I wonder why Mi separated from us?
Better yet, how did nobody notice?
It's too late to worry about it now…but no matter how much I search I haven't been able to find her.
I jumped from branch to branch in the trees to search for her.

I realized that I had stepped on something when I landed on one of the branches.
I looked below me, only to see a long neck.
A large body began to stand up in front of me.
Trying to look like it was scrubbing something off, it shook its head.

【Poison Salamander appeared! HP:1520】

I remembered the time when something like this guy came from Bear Forest to the Strange Plains.

"This time, just be obedient and stay in this forest."

It'd be troublesome to draw my sword so I just kept moving while trying to shake it off.
It was mowing down the trees while raising a fierce roar as it chased after me.
Just how tenacious is this monster? Right then, I had a flashback in my memories.

It was during my trip to Kwimill.
Just like I had done now, I stepped on something.
Even back then, I thought it troublesome and kept moving while trying to lose whatever was following me.
I remember what Gantetsu had said about it.
'The <Poison Salamander> is a tenacious monster that won't forget a grudge'.
…No way. That <Poison Salamander> was my fault?
I'm positive I lost the creature…even those large lizards must lose prey here and there.
I wonder how many of them gave up chasing me…

While I was thinking, the <Poison Salamander> had caught up and swung its leg at me.

【Poison Salamander attacked!】
【Ryua received no damage!】

Before the Salamander could step on me I hurled its body and stood up in one smooth motion, continuing my train of thought and movement.

【Poison Salamander was defeated! HP:0/1520】

…it was my fault that those people were killed?

No, that's impossible.

That can't be right. Roel would believe me.
Of course she would, she approached me even though I was different from the other adventurers.
(TL: ボク以外の冒険者だって来るはずだ。*)*
I'm not wrong…am I?

I started feeling dizzy, and I can't find Mi anywhere.
What should I do? How can I find her?
If something happened to her, the other two sisters will…

"MI-CHAAAAAAAAAA~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~N!"

I shouted from the bottom of my stomach.
My throat hurts from all this yelling.

【Steel Bear appeared! HP:831】

"Shut up!"

I swung a single fist at the stomach of the bear.
Its upper body disappeared and only the lower half remained.

【Steel Bear was defeated! HP:0/831】

I shouldn't be wasting my time with these things, not now.
I need to increase my pace of searching this forest.

"If you can hear me, please answer!"

///3rd Person & Mi's Perspective///

Before I had realized it, I was in the deeper part of the forest.
The atmosphere…is different than before.
The thick trees were so tall it looked like they reached the sky and the leaves are layered so heavily that the surroundings were dark.

Right from the start I was opposed to my beloved sisters becoming adventurers.
It was dangerous for me to be alone at the house, so in the end I was permitted to come with them.
(TL: 家で一人でいると物騒な事もあるという事で最終的には許された。*)*
I was somehow able to use recovery magic from birth, that's why I became a healer.

Mi felt that she was totally neglected.
She wasn't able to fulfill her role and both of her sisters were all over Ryua and Roel…it wasn't pleasant to Mi.

Her heart wasn't happy that her sisters had been stolen from her.
She separated wordlessly from the group for that reason.

But before she had realized it, she was in this forest.

Dreadful monsters lurked in this forest. Mi eventually came to realize the situation she was in.
If she was found by a monster here in the <Bear Forest>, she would lose her life.
She was consumed by fear and become unable to talk.

【Hellbear appeared! HP:1430】

As she stepped on a dry branch, it made a loud cracking sound that drew a monster many times her mass right in front of her.
Saliva was spilling from its mouth, it wasn't going to let this girl escape.

The bear brought its arm down on the girl who wasn't moving, but before it made contact the bear stopped.
It immediately retreated into the forest. The little girl, frightened beyond belief, ran the opposite way.
She thought that she was saved, but that only lasted a moment as she heard something similar to a vibration in the air.
Trembling as she looked back, there was a shadow.
No, not a shadow, it's whole body was black. To the little girl, it was like a mountain.
The shining, golden eyes of the shadow looked directly at Mi.
This wasn't just a monster…Mi understood that much.
That bear from earlier had seen this and ran.
She had thought she heard a cry as it disappeared into the trees…

【<The Violent King of the Quiet Forest> appeared! HP:5046】

This <The Violent King of the Quiet Forest>, rather than calling it the king of the bears, dictator suits it better.
There were traces that it was recently hunting since its claws were dyed with red.

Mi, controlled by fear, couldn't run away.
Something warm was streaming down her thighs.
Mi was unable to stand any longer and fell on her rear.

"He…lp…"

Mustering out her courage she raised a voice.

—-'you need to make sure that your sisters can hear your voice, okay?'

For some reason the words of Roel resounded in her head.
If she raised her voice, who knows who might hear it.
Even if she wanted to talk about something, her words never came out and it was frustrating.
"I want to talk with everyone…"
She didn't want to die in such place.

Mi opened her mouth and made a very loud shout.

“ONEE-CHAAAA~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~N!”

Just before <The Violent King of the Quiet Forest> ended her life, something jumped in front of her and the arm of the bear was slashed.

///Ryua’s Perspective///

While raising my sword overhead, I realized I was looking at the ruler of the forest.
I was able to save the little girl behind me.
Nobody would want to die in a place like this, it would fill them with regret.
As long as Mi is alive, the sisters can keep smiling.

“It’s going to be okay.”

While looking forward I tried to encourage Mi.
<The Violent King of the Quiet Forest> didn’t raise a cry, rather it just silently glared at me and then charged with both of its arms.
(TL: 暴王は雄叫びをあげる事もなく、ただ静かにボクの体を両腕でさばこうと行動を開始した。*)*
I feel like this monster is on a different level than what I’ve fought here before.
It’s probably the floor monster.

“Let’s leave this forest quickly.”

I slashed 2,3 times. As I swung my sword against <The Violent King of the Quiet Forest>, its body separated into 3 equal parts.
I figured its pelt would be expensive material so I tried to leave as much as possible intact.

【Ryua attacked! <The Violent King of the Quiet Forest> received 243319 damage!】
【<The Violent King of the Quiet Forest> was defeated! HP:0/5046】

I was going to call Mi and give her peace of mind knowing the beast was dead, but I found her already clinging to me, tears flowing.

“T-th-thank…you…*sniffle*…”

“Even if you hate me, I will still protect you. I don’t want any of you sisters making such a sad face.”

“I don’t…hate…you.”

Her words were fragmented as she cried. I slowly picked up on what she was trying to say.
With her small and fragile body, I felt enveloped in a tender feeling.

///

“Hmmm, are you here to discuss taking a loan?”

“Hey, Gametts-san, there are many people being treated unfairly by you. ‘I came here to pass judgement’ is what I came to discuss.

“Hoho~, no way. Is this a dangerous request from the guild?”

“No, this is a personal matter. The guild didn’t have anything to do with this.”

“Hou~, adventurers are just people who fight, it seems.”

Gametts leaned back and sunk into his soft chair, looking a the A rank adventurer before him like he was nothing.

“A rank and a dragon hunter, was it?”

【Siegel Lv: 66|Class: Dragon Hunter|Rank: A】

“Ah~, so you are that famous Dragon Hunter. I never thought that I’d be able to meet you. Anyways, money that has been borrowed has to be returned, isn’t that natural? How can you call that unfair?”

“There is a family that shed tears because of your actions. That alone is enough.”

“Well, this talk isn’t really going anywhere. So, do you have any evidence?”

“I only need to look for you and arrest you.”
(TL: それはおまえをふんじばってから探すさ*)*

“You are quite the fool, going so far for something like this…you really are an idiot. Did you come here thinking I would just give up? Zangiri!”

“…….is it fine to kill him?”

Beside Gametts was a man, his body swaying like it was a mirage.
His hair was messy and didn’t look like it had been washed in a while, giving an unclean impression.
His kimono was open down to his chest, it seems he really doesn’t care about how he looks.

“Are you his bodyguard? You sure have the atmosphere of one.”

Zangiri slowly drew his weapon.

“<Kougetsuzan>”

A vacuum of wind slashed at Seigel, he was completely unprepared for it.
(TL: 真空の刃としか思えない斬撃が縦にセイゲルを襲った。*)*
Moon Ring blade, a weapon from a foreign country.
It was like an invisible ring. It had a rhythm of 2,3,4 as it sliced, cornering Seigel.
He couldn’t avoid the attack very well and his chest was bleeding, but it wasn’t a big deal.

——this guy is dangerous.

After fighting many formidable enemies, Siegel can judge an opponent's strength.
This ill-mannered person in front of him has killed too many people.
That technique just now was aiming for the vitals.
Those attacks couldn't even be dodged by a hair.
His armor has cuts all over it and blood was leaking from his chest.

"Burst Braver!"

He swung his big sword towards Zangiri, but since the room is small he only did a light chain explosion.
Actually, Gametts had already escaped from the room, not that there was a room now as it was blown to pieces.
There was a scream amid the explosions, but Siegel didn't care anymore.
He can't go easy on this opponent.
Not taking this villain seriously would be a mistake.
That was proven to be true, as there was something like an explosion and Zangiri was right in front of him.
(TL:　その証拠に、そんな爆発など目の前に起こってなかったといわんばかりに間合いを一瞬で詰められた。)
'So that's what instant movement is', he thought at that moment.

"<ChiiriSakura>"

As if Zangiri was drawing a crescent moon with his weapon, it passed through Siegel's body.
Blood began gushing like a fountain up into the sky, it looked like cherry petals falling.

"Even an ally of justice…sometimes…gets defeat…ed…"

As Siegel lost consciousness he saw Zangiri staring at him with a blank expression on his face.

Chapter 24 – The Circumstances of the 3 Sisters Part 5

【Violent Nectar Mother appeared!　HP:1211】

"T-th-that is…!"

Mai was pointing with a shaking finger towards the bee. It was much larger than any of the <Terror Bee>s we had seen so far.
It had 8 wings and a stinger as long as its body.
Putting this creature beside an adult male, it's only a little larger. Even so, <Terror Bee>s have an aura that makes you feel like it can easily pierce beginner adventurers.
(TL:　総合的なサイズは成人男性よりもわずかに下回る程度だがテラービーとは一線を画すオーラ

が新米冒険者に刺すように伝わってきた。)

“Even though we’ve been able to get the honey…why does it have to appear now? We should retreat.”

“What about Ryua-san and Mi!?”

“Ryua-chan and Mi-chan are fine! Let’s escape!”

Roel pulled Mai and Ai’s hand and started running.
The wings of the queen bee began to reverberate through the forest as it chased them.

“It’s so loud! How did we not notice it!?”

“It’s too late for that now!”

Ai yelled at Mai, silencing her.
The truth is, there’s not much they can do. The queen summoned <Terror Bee>s from the surrounding woods as it flew.
They had to escape from the forest as fast as possible, and they were moving at full speed.

【The <Violent Nectar Mother> manipulated the <Terror Bee>s! The <Terror Bee>s flew in a row!】

They had formed into an ‘ | ‘ shape and then charged the girls.
(TL: テラービーの群れは八の字を描いたと思ったら順次並んで三人に向かってきた。)

【All the <Terror Bee>s attacked!】
【Roel received 14 damage! HP: 94/108】
【Ai received 21 damage! HP:10/31】
【Mai received 22 damage! HP:4/26】

【The <Violent Nectar Mother> summoned more <Terror Bee>s!】

The amount of bees doubled. They had already been outmatched before this, but now it’s just absurd.
Ai didn’t know what to do. She was worried about her sister who was on the verge of death and doing her best even though their escape was blocked. The 3 of them were surrounded.

“Mai! Keep going!”

“O…nee-san…”

The bees were planning their next attack, leaving no time to use <Heal>, Tensing up, Ai stumbled and fell over. The queen bee moved in to capitalize on that blunder.

【The <Violent Nectar Mother> attacked!】

Roel jumped in front of Ai.

The <Violent Nectar Mother>’s long stinger stabbed Roel.

【Roel received 91 damage! HP:3/108】

The stinger was sticking out of Roel’s back.
The poison immediately spread and Roel collapsed.

“R-Roel-san!”

“YOUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU!”

A loud war cry was hard from Ryua who was falling like a meteor from the sky. She brought her sword down on the queen.

/ / /

When the queen has stabbed Roel, I slashed at it as I fell. There wasn’t even a particle left of it, the queen had been utterly obliterated from the force of the strike. I had even left fissures from the strength of my attack, but I don’t care.
Just as I returned, Roel was…

【Ryua Attacked! Critical hit! 】
【The <Violent Nectar Mother> received 1363391 damage!】
【The <Violent Nectar Mother> was defeated! HP:0/1211】

“ROEL!”

“I-I’m fi…ne…”

“I’ll use an antidote right away!”

“<Cure>…<Heal>…<Heal>…<Heal>…”

Mi had been riding on me up till now, but she had gotten off of me and was healing Roel.
It seems she can use Cure, I wonder when that happened?

At any rate, I had been careless.
If I had arrived sooner, would things have been different?
Should I have just left the gathered honey and let the three of them escape?
I was careless…even though I defeated the monster, I feel nothing but regret.

“Mi-chan, thank you…I’m better now.”

Roel was teetering was she stood up. Mi had a very worried expression on her face as she watched.

“Roel, sorry, I…wasn’t able to protect you…”

“Ryua-chan protected Mi-chan. That itself is already enough, you know.”

Those encouraging words didn't resound within me at all.
If I had more power than this, I could have saved Mi and returned faster…what I have isn't enough. What can I do to get stronger than this?

"I'm sorry, we're still very inexperienced…we only ended up troubling you. I don't know what we could do to possibly apologize…"

Ai was really feeling down about the events that had unfolded and apologized to us.

"You too Mi! You really worried us…"

Mi was shaking her head and trembling.
I wonder if that was her way of apologizing?
Just as I thought, I need to get stronger. Not just me though, all of us.
Since we already got the honey we needed for the quest, we quickly left the forest.

/ / /

"Thanks! With this I can make a lot of Royal Jellies!"

The girl from the tool shop, Cynthia, had sparkles in her eyes as she looked at the honey she was holding like a child with a new toy.

"Ah, now that I think about it, are you alright? The floor monster appeared, didn't it?"

"We were attacked but I defeated it,"

"Seriously?! Then, then, maybe you picked up that guy's stinger?! Kozow-san would be really delighted, you know?"

"The bee vanished so I wasn't able to."

"Vani……what?"

"Well, that's fine" she said to finish the conversation. Cynthia once again went back to looking at the honey.
It seems like she was only there to finish up her business with us, as she disappeared into the shop right away with the honey in tow.
Royal jelly…just what kind of item is it?

/ / /

The inside of the guild was noisy.
It seems that Siegel was seriously injured and was found collapsed alongside some trash.
He was in a state where you could easily mistake him for dead, but it seems he was faintly breathing.

"For someone to be able to give Seigel such a beating…"
"The Heal Station was concentrating on his medical care but even now he still won't wake

up…”
“That guy…that guy ran out of luck.”

It was stirring inside the guild.
The murmurs started to focus on the main topic.
(TL: その呟きの主に視線が集まる。*)*

“The legendary <Master Swordsman Zangiri>…has revived.”

Clattering and shaking, an adventurer entered.
I thought that he was older than Gantetsu, that old man was carrying his own weapon, while he trembling as he was talking.
He looks older than Gantetsu, and with his weapon in his hand he trembled as he walked.

“Gametts Firm has a bodyguard. It’s…Zangiri himself! That’s right, Zangiri did this!”

“O-old man calm down…”

A female wizard was attempting to calm him down but Oldman didn’t stop.

“That guy killed over 100,000 people when he was alive! He’s been revived to kill again!”

“Zangiri died over 70 years ago! You should know that! Get a hold of yourself!”

Some of the adventurers were becoming agitated at Oldman, and several people stepped up to kick him out of the guild.

“Roel, the Seigel guy is……”

“Yeah……..I can’t believe it. But Seigel-san…I wonder why he fought that person?”

“It’s probably the bodyguard of that person from Gametts Firm…”

Mai suddenly muttered. There was another man beside Brushbeard back then. He had a changing weapon hanging from his back, and he definitely had a different status and atmosphere than the rest of them.

“B-but if we pay the quota then we don’t have to worry, right?”

It seems Mai was trying to shake off the fear with that.
It’s not like I don’t understand why she’s scared. Someone that dangerous working for the company you owe money to…you wouldn’t be able to rest easily.

“Now then, let’s brighten the mood. Let’s measure our levels!”

Ai wiped out the gloomy mood that had been hanging over us.

“Mine is just going to overflow anyways…”

It seems I'm starting to become timid…when did this happen?
I don't know what my actual level is, and watching everyone rejoicing about their <Level Up> leaves a bad taste in my mouth.
But seeing Roel happy about her <Level Up> also makes me happy.

"Wa,wa! Mi what did you do?! Your level became 12 in one go?!"

Level 8 is when you learn cure, so it makes sense now…but how did she level so much?
Oh right. I remember now.
Mi was in my party when I defeated the floor monster in the forest.
She was there when it died. That would explain it.

"What what wha~t?! My level is 9!"

Mai was surprised by the result.
I wonder how much of that is from the Bee floor monster.

"It's one of the '7 Mysteries of Adventurers' right? When in a party, all of them can become stronger at the same time."

"With just a strong adventurer and a strong opponent, everyone just suddenly got super strong huh?"

"Certainly that's a good way to level, but the risk is really big. Only your level and body become strong with that method. Yes, you may get new skills and such, but you don't get the battle experience. There's no point in growing without that."

After Mai and Ai, Aude broke in our conversation.
Seems like he's here again.

"If you fight a strong opponent, the risk of dying will increase. What you're doing by levelling like that is just risking your life later on, you know? Though who would take such a leech in the first place?"

"That's not right. You can always gain battle experience later on."
(TL:「その通りですね。うまい話なんて早々ありません」*)*

"Isn't it?"

Aude was acting exalted as he was talking against Ai who was striking back.
(TL: 得意げに語るオードに相槌をうつアイ。*)*
Even though Aude is a beginner like us, he knows a lot of stuff huh?

"Since Seigel-san taught you about that yesterday, right?"

As he was made fun of by a male adventurer, Aude made a face like he was being punished for doing something bad.

/ / /

Most of the reward was given to the 3 sisters.
They were way too reserved and modest, and we got into a dispute that got old really quickly.
It was a really tiring day. As we went home looking forward to the rest, Roel became curious about the Siegel incident from earlier and suggested that we should visit him.

Seigel was laying down on a bed covered in bandages with a strange tube sticking out.
If we didn't know we were looking at Siegel, I wouldn't have recognized him with this appearance.

"So cruel…"

Roel muttered.
Looking a this appearance, it's a miracle he survived.

"Oji-san, you did this for us…"

There was a kid we didn't know crying on the side.
Both of his parents were deep in thought while looking at Siegel, and didn't move the whole time.

"This world is hell…!"

The boy's father moaned and cried.

Gametts Firm. Zangiri.

For Siegel to end up like this…what reason did he have to fight such a losing battle?
Gametts Firm…for them to drive people into a corner like this, I should just personally….

"…chan! Ryua-chan!"

"Ah, yes?"

"Why are you making such a scary face? No way, Ryua-chan…"

"Let's leave."

Before Roel caught up with me I was already at the exit of the Heal Station.

Chapter 25 – The Circumstances of the 3 Sisters Part 6

"Now since today is the promised date, I would like to receive the quota payment."

Gametts had brought along his rather repugnant men to the residence of the sisters,
Beside him was Zangiri who seem to be looking at the empty sky.

“Yes.”

“Fumufumu~, well let me just confirm…let’s see here. Oh? Ai-san, this isn’t enough.”

“N-no way?! Take another look! With the interest it was supposed to be precisely 5000G!”

“No no, 5000G is not nearly enough, you know.”

“But we had talked about it before! The monthly quota should be 5000G right!?”

Gametts forced a sigh while the sisters glared at him.

“You need to remember that you haven’t been able to meet the quota before, and it was added onto this payment to make up for the loss. In short, the interest went up by 5%. You understand now, right?”

“But Gametts-san, you extended the settlement date yourself…and there was no mention in the contract! Why did it suddenly change now?”

“That’s right, no such thing was written there!”

Mai started to get angry and prepared to enter battle with the men in front of her. They just sneered at her and Mai’s intuition told her to stop.
She got goosebumps and stepped back.

“About that…I shouldn’t have to explain why, you should understand.”

“I totally disagree. If that was the case then why wasn’t it written in the contract?”
(TL:「納得いきません。それならば契約書にそう記しておくのが道理です」*)*

“Quota, interest. All of them were written there. Please don’t misunderstand and then try to justify yourself. Now, hand over the payment. The total quota for this month is 23250G.”

“That’s fraud!!!”

“That’s what I should say to you. If your parents had done their job properly two years ago and escorted us, my lovely subordinate wouldn’t have died. Boasting about being capable and then failing so is a cruel thing.”

“Ugh…”

The 2 of them kept silent.
Due to the debt they owed to the Gametts firm, both parents accepted the quest to be the bodyguard of Gametts to repay their loans.
The heavy burden those two had been carrying was now being dropped onto their daughter’s shoulders.

(TL: 二重の責務が重くのしかかり、今日に至る。*)*

“I’ve been looking over you like a guardian up until now, but I can’t wait for these payments anymore. You three are going to pay with your bodies. Hey!”

Gametts instructed his men.
The men rapidly moved and started to seize the sisters.

“Hiii….!”

The men pinned down Mi and bullied Mai.

“Please leave my younger sisters alone! I’ll do anything! Please!”

“Anything…?”

Ai was prostrating herself to Gametts who was staring at her suspiciously.

///

“Now that I think about it, aren’t the sisters paying the quota today?”

“Mm. I wonder if we were able to help them out enough.”

Quite a distance from our abode was the house of the sisters.
Every morning we would go to their house and travel together to the guild.
It’s only been 5 days since that started, but it’s now a routine for us.

In front of the house we found Mi and Mai crying.
At a glance you wouldn’t know what happened, but I was able to take a guess.

“Mai-chan, Mi-chan! Hey, what happened?”

“Onee-chan is…Onee-chan…in exchange for us…”

“What happened to Ai?”

I suddenly noticed that Ai was the only one not here.
I don’t know why, but it definitely had to do with the Gametts Firm.
I was boiling up just imaging their motive.

“Why…this is different from what we were told…”

From within me something was boiling and starting to flow out.

“No more…just what did we do to deserve this…Onee-chan…Onee-chan…”

Their tears fell onto the stone paving and the ground sucked them right up as if they never fell. It’s almost like the sisters were the tears that weren’t able to reach their sister who was

taken away.

"This is so cruel…just how many of those payments were left…"

Roel was clenching her teeth.
She was grasping her staff so tightly you could see blood trickling down.

"I will do something about this. For sure. Please, be at ease you two…"

I grasped Mai's hand and firmly vowed.

"Ryua…san, save onee-chan…"

Mai's disheveled hair was swaying and her face was a mess from the tears.
So, it seems Gametts drove the sisters into a corner to break the rules.
That brush beard planned it to be this way from the start.

"Ryua-chan, we need to go quickly…"

"Roel, wait here."

"No, please-"

"Wait. Here."

After the second time Roel fell silent. I was surprised that I could be this cold to her.
I wonder if Seigel felt like this…and then he was defeated. I'm sure he regretted it. That brush beard……..no Zangiri.
That man is extremely strong, but I don't care.

///

"Fufufufu…….Ai-san, you don't have to be that disappointed. As long as you're here I will give you anything you want."

Gametts' own room and office room. There was the pelt of a beast as a carpet, on the oblong desk there was a glass skull with pens stuck in it, and directly beside that was a fully spread out feather mattress king-sized bed.
Ai had been sitting in the middle of it since she walked into the room and hung her head the whole time.

"Were you worried I would sell you off to someone? No, no, who would ever sell such a prize."

"Especially a cute girl like you." he added as he looked at Ai, his eyes like a snake looking at a mouse.
Ai's body flinched and she backed off.
Gametts was on all fours and slowly cornering Ai.

“That, that is…”

“Didn’t you say you would do anything? Or were you lying? Should I call my men to get the two I left behind?”

“Please stop!…stop…”

“If that’s the case then listen to what I say.”

Gametts once again drew near to Ai.
As he put his hands on Ai’s shoulders she flinched out of reflex.

“Be obedient. If you react like that again…you understand right?”

“Father…Mother…”

“Your parents are already dead. I would know, since I killed them.”

“….eh?”

“Oops~” was all he said said as he covered his mouth with his hand.
It wasn’t that big of a mistake since it probably would have become known to her anyway. Gametts once again became talkative.

“Just now, what…?”

“Ah geez! For me to slip up like that…well, its fine. Both of your parents, they were frantically protecting me. That’s what you’ve thought up till now, right? If I let the death of my subordinate become the fault of your parents, I was sure that you girls would forever be burdened as the children of those two. Then all of you would forever be my slaves, it was a plan like that.”

“…lies!”

“No, it’s the truth. I was the one that killed my 2 subordinates, the monster was merely a means to an end. But something unexpected happened. The beast aimed at my subordinates and your mother blocked the monster’s attack. She was fatally wounded and because of the shock your father stopped and became the victim to the monster as well. I don’t think you knew about all that, did you? Ah, you are wondering what happened to me? I may look like this, but I trained hard, you know? Because fighting monsters was quite troublesome I just randomly employed a bodyguard. At any rate, in this job there dangerous people going after you at all times. The thought of being hunted hasn’t crossed your mind yet, right? Hey, are you still listening?”

Ai was at loss for words. A faint tear ran down her face, and quickly the amount increased.

“You demon…then, from the start we…”

“You cute sisters will forever be my play thi…oops, slaves. If you become one it’s a smaller

price to pay. You're good, but your younger sisters are also very cute. Especially…Mi, was it? I will make sure I pour her full with lots of my love. Hihihihihihihihihi~!"

"You brute…!"

Ai was in a rage, humiliated, and full of grief, She didn't understand why her parents had to die for something like that.
She wants to kill the pig in front of her right now, but she was powerless. Even now she was unable to speak.

"You of course are also a fine quality thing…you'll grow into a splendid adult for sure. A bountiful chest, my hand for sure will…hihihihi!"

"Someone save me…save me…"

A sound reverberated through the room as the door was being smashed on.
But when Gametts turned to face the door, it wasn't there anymore.
It had been smashed into pieces. Being the owner of the room, he was sure that noise had to be the door.

///

As I was grasping a guy by his neck, I saw Gammets and Ai on top of the bed. It was good that I made it in time, this guy I had in my hand was groaning.

"G-Gametts-san…run aw-"

Before he was able to finish talking I threw him out in the corridor.
"Gweeh!" he made such a miserable voice as he hit the wall. It seems he fainted.
Gametts wasn't too surprised, given the situation. He was able to find something agreeable in this situation and then he looked at me while bowing.

"You, certainly we met each other once. I remember 5 days ago, you were at the house of the sisters when we visited. I see, you posses such skills at such a young age."

"Get away from Ai-san."

"Fuun, that was quite a crude impression, you know. You just broke in here, how rude can you be?"

Gametts looked like he was evaluating me as he looked at me from top to bottom.
It feels disgusting. It wasn't nice being looked at like that.
(TL: 気持ち悪い、そうとしかいいようがなかった。*)*

"Ai-san, this way."

Ignoring Gametts, I pulled her hand. Suddenly a man appeared beside the door and as expected even Gametts was surprised.

“Z-Zangiri!”

In the corner of the room, Zangiri who was called finally started to show some movement.
However I knew from the start he had been there.
When I entered the room I was able to feel a man glaring at me.
It was an inquisitive, detestable stare.

“I have a proposal, I want to fight that girl outside. Otherwise the important place where you work will be destroyed again.”

“D-do whatever you want. Now Ai-san, come this way.”

Just as he was about to reach her I smashed his hand.

“AGAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!!”

“Ai-san, I will guarantee your safety if you come with me.”

I ignored Gametts’s scream, and he thrust out a demand.
No, it wasn’t a demand but rather an order. For this scoundrel to try and compromise in this situation, I really hate this person.

“Za-za-zangiri! What are you doing?! Hurry, hurry up and kill that girl!”

“It looks like that girl wants to go out…but if that’s the case then this place will become a battlefield.”

“Who cares! KILL HER!!!”

“<Kougetsuzen>”

In the same instant he was ordered, Zangiri released a vacuum of blades.
His blade was rotating while aiming for my vital parts.
I immediately understood something: This guy isn’t strong.

If this guy went to the <Caves of Hell>, I think that huge 4-headed dog could defeat him.
…Never mind, that monster was just a low class floor monster. What a foolish idea, thinking this guy could be that dangerous.

I’ve changed since I left those caves. I still don’t mind being hit but now I think ‘if I take blows then my clothes will get torn, which means we’ll need to spend more money’…in an instant I was in front of Zangiri who couldn’t react at all.

I grasped his head and smashed it into the floor.
The wooden flooring was utterly destroyed, and from Zangiri’s head a large amount of blood was pooling.

“Gah…wah…”

I don’t plan on killing him, but I want him to lie down for a bit.
My business isn’t with him.
I leisurely walked over to Gametts who was shaking out of fear.

Chapter 26 – The Circumstances of the 3 Sisters End

“Now then…”

Gametts was in a cold sweat as I pinned him with my arm.
While I was thinking of what to do with him since I don’t want to kill him, Gammets glared at me.

“D-d-don’t get cocky!”

【Gammets used <Gold Shower>!】

Countless gold coins were released from Gametts and flew at me.
I was surprised because it was from such a close range, but I just blew them away with one hand.

“Gwuuh! I-I am!”

【Gammets|Lv: 21|Class: Merchant|Rank: None】

“Merchants aren’t made for fighting, but they can be helpful depending on the situation.”
(TL:「戦闘に不向きと言われた商人だが、立ち回り次第では」*)*

He was being noisy so I gave his head a light tap.
I think I still used a little too much strength since his head was nearly blown off. Gametts fainted immediately.
It seems he had trained his body a little.
That could have turned out much worse.

“Ryua-san…did you come to help me?”

“Yeah. Let’s go back to your sisters now.”

“You’ve done so much…I can’t even imagine how I can repay you…”

“I just want the 3 of you to be happy. I don’t want to see people die anymore.”

Ai embraced me.
It looks like she was terrified. She was crying and repeating her words of gratitude again and again.

Someone stood up behind me.

I turned around and saw Zangiri, his head still gushing out blood, grasping his weapon tightly.

“Do you still want to fight?”

“If you want to defeat me you’ll have to cut off my arms and separate my head from my body.”

“You’ll die fighting with a body like that.”

“Yeah, seems so.”

As he said that I recalled how he felt in my hand earlier.
I felt something off when I threw him down.
It was similar to that thing…

“Old man, are you already dead?”

“Hou, how did you know?”

I had an unpleasant premonition about this situation. It’s like the time at the Ghost Mansion.
This person is already dead, so to speak he’s a <Vengeful Ghost>.

“You died 70 years ago, right?”

“Master swordsman Zangiri…no, human killer was my more famous title. I regretted never meeting anyone stronger than myself. But now…I see you as a worthy opponent.”

“Just for that…”

“I thought you of all people would understand.”

“Shall we finish this?”

“<Kokuu Shuugetsu>…”
(TL: Arc Moon: Heaven’s End)

I had been surrounded by a brilliant vacuum of blades, flowing towards me with the intent to mince.
Being trapped like this isn’t a threat to me, since this attack is like being swung at by a dull blade.
(TL:こんな 刃 もついてい ない のと同じような もの に囲まれた ところ で ボク にとって は何の 脅威 にもなら ない)
I quickly spun around and erased the attack with wind pressure.

“<ChiriSakura>”
(TL: Falling Sakura Blossoms)

Using a pinpoint attack I aimed at the center of his weapon and broke it with my fingers.

However his weapon began to melt into a viscous liquid.from where I attacked it.
(TL:しかし 、折られた部分 から 少しずつ 刀身 が実体 化する 。)
I wonder how many other <Vengeful Ghosts> exist…I'm still trying to figure out how to deal with them.

"It seems it'll be possible for me to die again."

"Why are you so concerned about fighting strong opponents?"

"I started to kill at a young age. My parents were killed before my eyes and everything else was snatched away except my urge to kill and kill and kill…Getting stronger and killing faster until I eventually died from a strong enemy. In the end, my reason to live was to kill until I am killed. Although I should have fulfilled my goal, I was still unsatisfied."

Zangiri quietly told us.
His quivering body stopped before I knew it.

"How many decades passed like that, I wonder…? I eventually was exhausted and ambushed."

I didn't interrupt him, I just leaned a little closer to hear what Zangiri had to say.
His story didn't really seem that interesting.
But you should never miss out on listening to a conversation.
Both of this guy's parents died. I caught that much from his tale.

"I revived instantly and slew the ones that killed me. I attacked with the intent to kill. Right at that moment…that was when I felt that I wanted to fight strong opponents."

After he was done talking, he once again readied his weapon.

"However, no matter how far I travelled in this world I never found what I desired. I gave up and rolled over, becoming that old guy's bodyguard. Young girl…no. What is your name?"

"Ryua."

"Ryua…use that longsword hanging on your waist. Show me that you can kill what I have become."

"Old man, you are fine with disappearing?"

"There will never be a more fitting way."

"…I understand"

I drew my sword.
Zangiri seemed satisfied.

I went at him with all my strength.

Zangiri was unable to react just like the last time I charged him.
I cut his corpse with all of my might.
Both his weapon and wavering body were cleanly cut.

“That much…strength…you…as I expected…could do it…”

He collapsed onto the floor and before long he had starting turned into light and slowly disappearing.

“…I will be fine you know”

“I wonder…about…that…”

As he muttered those final words, Zangiri completely vanished.

“I am…”

The regret I felt at <Bees Forest>.
It was a brief moment, but at that time I felt like I needed to be even stronger. I definitely thought that.
In that brief moment…maybe I was the same as Zangiri.
No…even 10 years ago when I was in the <Caves of Hell> I killed many enemies in my pursuit of strength.

Was that it?

Just so that I could defeated that one-winged demon?

Once again my head is getting fuzzy.

“Ryua-san…are you okay?”

Ai had been listening to Zangiri and I talk since the beginning and came over to me.

“Yes…let’s head back now.”

I extended my hand to Ai, though she paused for a bit before she took it.
I don’t understand why I feel anxious.
That can wait, I need to take Ai back to her sisters as soon as possible.
I want to see their smiling faces…

Oh, we turned Gametts over to the Kingdom’s security force, he was still out cold.
I have no idea what they did to him afterwards. I entrusted his fate to them.

/ / /

“Onee-chan!”

The 3 sisters embraced each other.

It seems Roel had been encouraging them all this time.

“Onee-chan you big idiot! Leaving the two of us to live on alone is overdoing things!”

“……please don’t go anymore.”

“I’m really sorry you two. but if I didn’t…”

The scene unfolding in front of us was radiant.
I, who was only able to escape by myself those 10 years ago, was able to save another person now.
Zangiri’s path…maybe pursuing power leads you to destruction.
Though that very power was what saved them this time.

“Ryua-chan…you are beyond strong, just like I thought.”

I think…Zangiri had too much power. He didn’t have anyone he could trust or rely on and was eventually swallowed by his strength.

“We all lose someone important eventually, but we’re never alone.”

“What was that?”

“It’s nothing.”

I once again looked upon the sisters who were beaming with happiness.
Their tear-stained faces were a thing of the past.
As I looked, I realized Ai was deeply lowering her head again.

“Ryua-san, our gratitude alone will never be enough to make up for all that you’ve done for us. I may not be able to do much, but if you are ever in trouble, I will lend you all of my power.”

“Me too! Me too!”

Mai was being energetic while Mi was silently bowing.
However, I had something I wanted to know.

“Will the three of you continue to be adventurers, even after all of this?”

“Yes. Thanks to you and Roel we truly understand what it means to be an adventurer. You don’t have to worry anymore.”

“Fufu” Ai laughed, I can’t feel any of the despair she had in that man’s room.
I’m a little worried about them, but didn’t their level rise quickly in one go?

“If something were to happen again, we will lend our strength to you. Please don’t do something rash by yourselves.”

“No problem~! Even though we’ve been relying on you thus far, we can’t keep going like that forever. My skill with this bow has risen quite a bit so we’ll be all right!”

“It seems that having your level rise doesn’t change much about your actual skill. Aude-san said that before.”

“Didn’t Aude hear that from Seigel? Oh! I wonder if he’s woken yet?”

“Let’s check when we return.”

The sisters said their farewells and we headed to the Heal Station.

“It’s been a long time since the three of us went, but let’s visit Father and Mother’s grave.”

I heard Ai’s gentle voice from behind me.
I wonder if AI will tell them the truth.
It seems she doesn’t have any intention to.
Though I think she will eventually.

/ / /

The room hadn’t changed since our last visit. Tube sticking out and covered in bandages, Siegel had his eyes closed.

“Just as I thought…he still hasn’t recovered.”

“Hey, Roel, is it forbidden to use your <Heal> on him?”

“I think a lot of people have already done that, and this Heal Station has a famous High Priest. I heard that person already used <Heal> on Siegel, so for me to do it…”

“But you still haven’t tried to do it?”

“Yeah, um…”

Roel used her gentle <Heal> on Siegel.
However, Siegel’s eyes stayed closed. There wasn’t any apparent change.

“Just as I thought, it won’t-”

Just as she gave up, Siegel’s fingers slightly moved.

“W-what? Just now, didn’t he move?”

“Eh? That can’t be…”

“Try healing him again!”

Roel used <Heal> on Seigel once again.

This time his eyelids moved a little.

"…ah"

His lips briefly moved.
He mustered all of his strength to leak out a faint voice.

"Seigel-san?"

"….is"

"Is he conscious!?"

"…-re is. this place is…"

Though his eyes stayed closed, his mouth was moving here and there.
Roel continued to heal Siegel in disbelief, trying to infuse him with life.
Before long, his eyes opened and he stared at the bright lights before him.

"…am I still alive?"

"Yes!"

"I see…"

"Should I call the staff here?"

"No, that's fine……more than that, please listen to me…About the Gametts Firm."

"I managed to do something about them."

Seigel was at a loss for a while.
The first time I met him, he gave off a feeling of overconfidence. But right now he has quite the woeful expression.
I spoke about what happened. Siegel only had one thing to say.

"Is that true? I wasn't able to do my job well…sorry…haha…"

"T-that's not true!"

"You don't need to be like that. I wasn't able to even hit that katana-wielding bastard on his hand or leg. Hey, Ryua, what are the <Roots> of your strength?"

"<Roots>?"

"Why are you so strong? What did you do?"

"That's because I fought in the <Caves of Hell>…"

If I say something about that place, will I regret it?

‘He won’t believe me anyways, so I don’t need to worry’ was what I was thinking.

“<Caves of Hell>…?”

“Just as I thought, you don’t believe me either.”

“No, I think I heard something like that somewhere.”

Siegel smiled, showing his white teeth. “Regardless, it’s fine” he said, and the topic was changed.

“I already delivered Gametts to the Kingdom’s security force,so it’s probably already the end for him. An investigation was started at their office and proof of their fraud was found. It’s not coming back.”

“With this, no one will have to cry anymore, right?”

“Ah, I wonder if that family is smiling now…I haven’t apologized properly to those people. I was unable to lend my assistance to them.”

“Aah! You’re up?!”

A boy was standing in the entrance to the room.
Behind him were his parents.

“Ojisan! You’re better now!”

“Not quite, haha…I still have to go through some more treatments.”

“Seigel-san, for you to end up like that for us…”

“If you want to say your thanks, direct it to this tomboy. I ended up getting the tables turned on me.”

As Seigel explained it to the parents, the family of 3 seemed to understand and said their words of gratitude to me.
Only the boy was looking at Siegel with a pleased face.
A staff member came by and saw Siegel was conscious and talking. He quickly ran over to him.

“Se-Segeil-san?”

“Yo, it appears that I was saved.”

“Hahahahahaha!” Siegel laughed more than he should have.
Before long the staff had gathered and an there was an uproar for a while.
It became a discussion of this and that related to his body, but Siegel was able to settle everything.

<Caves of Hell>.
It's not a lie that I fought in that place. Even Siegel didn't know about it.

I wonder why?
What is the danger level there?
What was my level now?
Seigel said that my strength was because of my <roots>.
Suddenly, things changed.

/ / /

In a dark basement made of stone.
Candles were lit and a single person was quietly sitting.
On the corroded table was a skull, it looked rather important. A person in a black robe was gently brushing it.

"Ah, it died."

Even though the person was alone, a grumble was heard.
The person inside the robes had black paint on their white body and a childish face.

"Zangiri, the killer from the east…even though I went through great pains to revive him, it seems he ended up doing nothing in the end."
(TL:「アズマの人斬りザンギリ。 せっかく、蘇らせてやったのに結局こいつ何もしてないでやんの」*)*

"Then, how about you make a subordinate with your own hands?"

There hadn't been anyone else in the basement a moment before, but now a middle-aged man wearing a hat was leaning on the wall.

"At least learn how to knock."

"Last time I did knock but nobody was here."

"Were you surprised?"

Robes was mocking the man.
As if replying to that, the man made a large cobra appear in his palm.

"Yeah, I was really surprised."

"Back off a little. What business do you have with me anyways?"

"At least be a little scared."

The man erased the the cobra in his hand.

"Anyways, it's about the status of the surprise attack we have planned for the festival. I was wondering if you've finished yet."

“If you are here for something useless like that, go home. Doing things this way has been quite irritating and I don’t have any good pieces left. Since it’s a big event I want to make sure it’s flashy.”

“Can’t you get the woman that hung herself at her mansion? Isn’t that a good specimen?”

“It was erased before I could get to it. It was probably an exorcist, but it’s the same troublesome fellow that’s been appearing everywhere.”

“How unexpected! I recently encountered the same fellow and my subordinate was easily killed.

Once again the man took out a large cobra from his palm as an example.

“Of course, since that’s a small fry monster.”

“No, seriously, it was a shock. I thought that I could do them in since it looked like they were just loitering in that dungeon.”

“Did you go there to play?”

“Those guys seem like they’ll be a hindrance. Especially that adventurer I tried to erase. How am I supposed to deal with that lady?”

“If you want to get rid of them just use a stronger monster…jeez I’m tired. I don’t have time for your comedy act, get out.”

“Don’t take too long. The festival starts soon.”

The capped man casually left the basement through the door.

“Fuun…noisy servant. Such an uncivilized beast master. I can’t stand seeing that guy’s stunts. Even so, the festival…”

A smile floated on the boy’s face and once again he caressed the skull.

“So, it’s really dead.”

The boy had an ecstatic expression on his face, his gaze was piercing the ceiling.

“Waaaah…I ‘m jealous…I’m jealous of a corpse…death is the ultimate beauty you know, when will I reach my goal…I wonder if there is a lovely girl being left to die somewhere? Mufu…muhihihihi…”

The boy held the skull in his arms and caressed it endlessly.

Monster Book

【Killer Tail HP:53】

It’s a scorpion. It weakens its prey using a poison needle and eats them.
It may look big, but pay attention to its long reach. Its speed isn’t as deadly as its range.
It’s not scary as an opponent to a prepared adventurer.
However, its dangerous if a group of them appears so being surrounded by them is really dangerous.

【Behemoth of Catastrophe HP:815】
The floor monster on the 4th Floor of <Avangard Cave>.
Its steel-like skin prevents blades from piercing, no matter where you hit it.
It attacks adventurers by charging with its large body.

【Wild Squirrel HP:24】
As a group, they frequently inflict serious damage to crops.
Its sharp fangs can even crush nuts.
Its breeding ability is very high, if you don’t completely exterminate them they will quickly multiply.

【<Plains Runner> HP:565】
A large tiger with a black and white fur pattern.
Its max speed is 300km/h when hunting game.
The jaw of this beast is strong enough to bite through a human instantly.
The only way to escape from this creature is to lure it away with food or use a comrade as bait.

【<Flying Squirrel of Gale> HP:34】
It watches adventurers from above, in the trees.
It attacks those that enter its range, and glides towards them to begin its assault.
Since it can use Wind Magic, beginner adventurers wouldn’t have an easy time dealing with it.

【<The Violent King of the Quiet Forest> HP:5046】
This monstrous bear has a physique many times larger than a Hellbear.
It won’t emit any noise as it assaults monsters and invaders in its forest, leaving them barely alive.
It’s said that this beast savors the first-rate fear the victims experience as it does this.

【<Violent Nectar Mother> HP:1211】
The Queen of the <Terror Bee>s.
It will rarely show its face, and as long as you don’t touch its nest it’s rather harmless.
However, if you do mess with the nest, the Queen’s fury will befall you without mercy.
The honey from this bee is one of the raw materials for high grade recovery medicine. Its stinger is also a priceless material for weapons, but only veteran adventurers can get it.

Full Text Arc 5

Enjoy Arc 5!

Chapter 27 – Crossing the Kizel Canyon Part 1

"Avangard Tougi Taikai?"

"Yes! You'll participate, right?"

Avangard Tougi Taikai seems to be an event that is held once every year.
Several days have passed since Siegel woke up and he's completely recovered, It seems he's gotten over his depression was well since he's calling out to every girl he sees in the area…
By chance we were passing through and he saw us.

"It's the first time I heard about it, how about you Roel?"

"Yeah I have, but if I remember right it's not a normal festival."

"Oh? What kind of festival is it?"

"Hmm…how to explain it…"

"A lot of people gather from all over, it's really fun! And there are a lot of girls! Anyways, the festival has a main event. All the adventurers gathered there can participate in a tournament to decide who is on top. The champion receives 1 million gold! How about that? You drooling for that reward? Want me to escort you there?

"The Imperial capital is a little far, but Ryua-chan wanted to go there. Should we?"

"Well, considering it's only once a year, if I don't go now I'll have to wait a whole year to see it again. Let's go."

We had been confirming quest details up until now, but since we're going to the festival we won't be able to complete any of them. We quickly returned the documents to their original locations.

"Wait a minute, how do you plan on getting to the Imperial Capital? There's only way way to get there, through the <Kizel Canyon>. It's danger level is 10, you know? Ryua won't have any problems, but lack of preparation is one's greatest enemy so I will assi-"

"Oh! I overheard you're going to the Imperial Capital? Perfect timing."

Cynthia from the item shop came and interrupted Seigel.

"I also have some business at the Capital and I was thinking of making an escort quest. Would it be possible for you two to take it? When we reach the Capital I'll pay you the reward. Your rank should also raise to B, no?"

“The road to becoming a B rank is rather harsh, you know. It’s one of the obstacles that an adventurer must eventually face. There are a lot of people that have become frustrated while trying to reach that rank. At any rate, it’s a totally different world from being a D rank adventurer. The guild will only recognize you after you’ve done a lot of dangerous quests such as escorting and getting materials from a floor monster, even this upcoming event has merit to them.

“Ryua-chan, how about it?”

“Yeah, the timing couldn’t have been better.”

“Then it’s decided. Rintei-san, please do what you need to do.”

While the procedures were being completed, Siegel wasn’t giving up and kept talking and talking. Nobody responded to him.

[Please escort me to the Imperial Capital!]
[Client: Item Shop’s Cyntha]
[Reward: 1400G]

“S-so messy…”

It was a pretty sketchy looking quest document, it even caught Siegel’s attention.

“It’s fine~. This much will suffice. I would write the details but it would end up being skipped over anyways.”

“No, isn’t something like that…adventurers like it when you write the details.”

“Well, since you’re not taking the quest it’ll be fine.”

“Eh? I’m being left behind?”

We decided to leave for the Capital tomorrow after some deliberation.

/ / /

It took us one day to get from Kwimill to the <Kizel Canyon> by coach.
There’s some fencing here and there along the road.
I thought it was going to be a more harsh journey but I ended up being disappointed.
However, even if you look over the fence you can’t see the bottom of the Canyon.
If someone slipped and fell off the cliff I’m not confident that I could save them in time.
The pebbles and stones on the road made it rugged, but the coach just kept moving on.

“Ryua-chan, looking down isn’t a good idea~?”

Cynthia was eating some kind of sweet while waving her hand at me. The coach was unexpectedly large on the inside, even with the 4 of us sitting inside there was space left. Why did I say 4 people? Siegel ended up coming along but he was frantically trying to lead

the coach.

“That guy…I’ll be honest for a second: he isn’t that helpful. He’s just controlling the horses pulling the coach.

“He is a famous A rank, you know…”

Roel was perplexed at Cynthia’s ability to go at her own pace.
At any rate, is an escort really needed? There doesn’t seem to be many monsters.
I usually don’t need to take a break, but this shaking coach is making me drowsy…

“Fuuuaa~…”

“Oh, are you sleepy? Since you’re an escort you have to stay awake. Here you go.”

Cynthia gave me something red. Without hesitation I instantly put it in my mouth and swallowed it. Suddenly my throat and mouth were assaulted with an extremely painful and spicy burning.

“NNN! Wa-water! Water!”

“Ryua-chan, get a grip! Here, water!”

Thanks to Roel giving me water I was able to stop the pain.
Cynthia was laughing merrily at my reaction.

“That only happened because you’re so careless. Just because monsters haven’t appeared in this place yet doesn’t mean they won’t. That yawn that you just did now, during that brief moment your escort target might get injured and cause the quest to fail, right?”

“I’ll do my best…though what was that just now?”

“Spark Chili Pepper.”

I wonder why she would be carrying something like that?
She’s been giving a lot of affection to Roel and myself…probably because she’s a little older than us.
Though if I had to choose between Cynthia or Ai as a sister, it would be Ai.

“You know, if the floor monster appears I can do something about my boredom.”

“Aww~ I’m sooo sorry~”

Seigel seemed to be looking forward to fighting while Cynthia was just joking with him.
Quite contrary to what they had been talking about, we were attacked by normal monsters.

【<Raging Monkey> x2 appeared! HP:73】

From above us on a cliff there were large monkeys descending.

“Oh! These guys are actually kind of tough due to a higher physical strength than you’d expect. I saw some beginner adventurers crying because of these things. The floor monster is the chief of these guys.”

“Okay, wake yourself up and get ready.”

“Don’t be so carefree!” is what I wanted to say, but that’s just how those two are it seems.
But these monsters are so slow it might make me fall asleep regardless.
I pulverized one of them, and saw Roel was in high spirits as she grilled one with her <Fire Rod>.

【Roel used <Fire Rod>! <Raging Monkey> received 301 damage!】
【<Raging Monkey> was defeated! HP:0/73】

I noticed that she’s been doing more damage than before.
‘She has outrageous talent’ is what I’ve been thinking about Roel lately.

“Wow, neither of you are lacking…especially Ryua-chin, just what was that?”

“chi..chin?”

“How improper!”

Even though I had responded to that nickname Roel still spoke her mind.

“Hahahahaha! Both of you are really strong! You don’t need me it seems!”

“Yeah, really.”

“Ah, please don’t say it like that…”

Siegel has become pretty pitiful lately.
I don’t think he’s a bad person, but he’s quite vain.
We kept advancing until the sun had completely set.

“It’s really dark, as expected of a canyon at nightfall. We should sleep out here tonight.”

“We should light a fire in that case. I’ll use my <Fire Rod>…”

“In this canyon there are no monsters afraid of fire. Just the opposite, actually. It’ll just give away our position. Also there’s no need to use your staff for small things like this.

“We’ll need someone to be a lookout while the others are sleeping.”

I don’t know if we trusted each other yet but being with Cynthia and Siegel seems to be really fun.

“Sure, I’ll do it. I’m good at noticing presences since I’m used to situations like this.

“So you’re like a cat? You can sleep but if something approaches you’ll quickly get up? Like that?”

“Y-yeah. pretty much.”

Cynthia used a weird reference for comparison but it was like that in the <Caves of Hell> pretty much all the time.
No matter where or when I slept I was always attacked.
Suddenly I felt Siegel look at me.
It was different than when he was kidding around, he seems serious this time.
Instantly he went back to normal.

“Making a lady be the lookout is something I can’t agree with. Rely on me for a while and let me do it.”

“Siegel watching over us is reassuring but…”

“It’s fine, it’s fine. We should get some sleep.”

“You really don’t have any worries, huh?”

“If you assault any of us I will kill you.”

“Yeah yeah.”

Why would Siegel assault Cynthia? I wonder why she said that?

Roel and Cynthia fell asleep quickly.
Silence fell upon the inside of the coach. It was truly nighttime now.

“Ryua, are you by any chance awake?”

“…How did you know?”

“Your fighting skills are top notch but you’re rather bad at pretending to sleep.”

“Pretending?”

“…hey, Ryua, just how high is your level?”

“It says <Overflow> so it seems like it’s over 100.”

“It sure is……over level 100 huh? With your strength alone you’re on par with S rank adventurers…”

“S rank?”

A, B, C , D…going by that order S should be way lower than D.
I’m the same as those guys?

“There are only 10 of them in the world. Each nation has their own elite adventurer…no, they aren’t adventurers anymore. All of them are over level 100, a group of monsters. Most humans end up hitting their level cap and retire at that point.”

I recalled Grundom and what he told me. I understood my limit at that time, and when someone reaches that it seems they end up breaking. I don’t want to end up like Grundom who was dragging others down with him.

“Well, I’m still happy that I haven’t reached my level cap yet. Ryua, just what kind of guy did you defeat at the <Caves of Hell>?”

“Hmm well…<King of Destruction>, Ba…no, Va…Van-something.”

“<King of Destruction>?”

“Yeah, he made a lot of circular orbs of light that evaporated whatever they touched. There was also that large snake and dog, they sure were strong…”

I kept advancing inside of that dark cave, relying on the fire I lit.
No matter how much I think about it, I can’t recall why I worked so hard at that place.
Really, I just can’t remember.

“<Caves of Hell> huh…”

After mumbling that he fell silent for a while.

“Ryua, why don’t you have a match with me?”

Siegel suddenly suggested that, smiling at me.

Chapter 28 – Crossing the Kizel Canyon! Part 2

“A-a match?”

“Yeah~, I want to have a duel.”

“But, if you die…”

“You can do that to me?”

The smile disappeared from Seigel’s face.

“We don’t have to be serious, we can use these.”

Saying that, Seigel picked up two branches that fell down from a nearby tree.

“Just stop before you make contact and it should be fine. First person to say “I give up” loses the match.”

Seigel was dangling the branch towards me, gesturing for me to take it. I want to sleep already and this is just bothersome…but he has a pretty serious expression and atmosphere. I don't think he'll let me sleep until I do what he wants.

"If it's just a little then it should be fine."

"Okay~, so then how about going over there?"

We moved away from where Roel and Cynthia were sleeping, readied our stances, and faced each other.

"You can come at me whenever you want."

Seigel provoked me with his arm. I could try to stop just before I hit him, but what if the wind pressure does something?
While I was contemplating that, Seigel ran out of patience and attacked first.
He thrust his branch at my chest. I can't think of his weapon as just a wood branch with this much intensity.
I evaded the thrust from Seigel's stick by pulling back, and as the distance closed I thrust my stick at him.
I didn't plan on putting much strength into it but the wind pressure still ended up crushing his windpipe.

"*cough**cough*…*cough*…"

"I-I'm very sorry!"

"*cough*…don't apologize, it's fine. I give up."

Seigel brought up both of his arms signalling his surrender.

"That katana-bastard also defeated me."

Seigel was scratching his head when he said that. We looked at the cliff and spoke to each other, shrouded by the darkness of the night.

"Ryua, that was really amazing. With that much strength you can do anything you want. But I have a warning for you."

Seigel paused for a while and took a deep breath.

"Losing at least once is something you should experience. There are some people that never know that frustration and when they finally experience it, they break. This world is wide, and you should experience all it has to offer. Take a journey, observe things."

"It didn't only happen once, you know."

Even I was surprised about the anger welling up in me. I wasn't about to forgive Seigel's insensitive speech. I quickly faced him and saw him looking at me, fear in his eyes.

“The <Cave Rabbit> in the <Caves of Hell> beat me over and over and I cried many times. Just when I thought I finally won against it I was attacked by a bat and lost. I was defeated over and over and over until I could win, and then I was ambushed by a large spider who spun his web around me and I barely escaped only to run into a large dog with 4 heads. I can’t even remember how many times I lost. It was mortifying and I cried a lot of times without anyone to comfort me. I was alone that whole time. Fighting and fighting even though I was constantly beaten. I never want to lose anymore. This power that I have, I will keep using it to win. Are you still going to say, after hearing all of that, that I should lose to experience it?”

Seigel said nothing for a short while.
What was he thinking? He avoided my gaze and looked at where the sun was rising.

“Please, forgive me.”

Seigel was prostrating himself.
I didn’t think he would end up going that far to apologize.

“Please forgive my thoughtless speech. I said it because I wanted you to understand anguish. I won’t do something like hurting your pride again.”

“N-no you don’t have to go that far…”

“This is how it should be.”

Seigel maintained his position, unmoving.
I faced towards the the coach, even I feel bad like this.
Turning back to him, he was still preserving his position.

“Uh that…I forgive you, so…”

“Really?”

He raised his head to me and confirmed it twice. After it was all sorted he went to bed.
If a monster shows up I will deal with it.
It seems he believes in me, I can hear him snoring from here.
He was noisy and pushing with his leg, but I noticed a small smile float onto his face.
Roel and Cynthia were still sleeping soundly, their breathing was deep.
‘What am I supposed to do if Seigel’s snoring interferes with me sensing a monster…’, I was thinking this with a few expletives mixed in.
I forced myself to sleep.

///

“Roel, can this be eaten?”

“Eat, eat! *munch* *munch*”

Cynthia seems to enjoy giving us food, almost like she was feeding pets,
No matter what we ate it looked like it was interesting for her.
The confections she had been holding were already reduced to about half.

“Here, aa~~hn!”

“*munch* *munch*”

“Please do “aa~~hn” for me too!”

“Pay attention to where we’re going.”

The give and take continued with monsters sometimes appearing. They weren’t a big deal so I found myself dozing off here and there.

【<Raging Monkey> appeared! HP:73】
【<Pecking Bird> appeared! HP:49】
【<Slash Cat> appeared! HP:42】

The <Pecking Bird> kept escaping into the sky where the <Fire Rod>’s flame couldn’t reach.
Roel was clearly mad about this since she was shaking and waving her staff at it.
I jumped into the air to defeat it, but Roel was just glaring with bulging cheeks.
Seigel enthusiastically dealt with the other two monsters, even using a technique to attack them.”Concentrate on the Coach!” you could hear Cynthia scolding Seigel.

“Ryua-chin, you really are strong!”

“Really…? mugya!”

She had been embracing me like this a lot during our journey.
Roel saw this, and not wanting to lose hugged me tighter.

“I used <Heal> on you so you should be fine, right?

Even though I wasn’t injured, Roel had used <Heal> on me.
The bird meat keeps being snatched, but no one knows who’s been stealing it.
Is the <Fire Rod> why the bird meat always ends up being like that?

“It seems like we’ll be able to reach the canyon’s midway point today, so we’ll be stopping at the Kizel Lodge tonight.”

“Oh right! I forgot something like that existed here. It’s pretty expensive though.”

“Kizel Lodging, is it? Does such a place exist here?”

“For sure. There’s also a hot spring! The manager is a reitred A rank adventurer so you can rest easy knowing there’s no problems even if a floor monster appears!”

“Even though some adventurers retire…being one is too fun for me. I don’t want to stop.”

I don’t know of anything fun to do besides being an adventurer. I don’t know how others feel about it, but going with Roel to the inn sounds a little tempting. Okay, really tempting.

“Kizel Lodge is just out of the danger zone at the midway point, but due to that the price is higher than usual.”

“It’s another one of the [Adventurer’s 7 Mysteries], for some reason most monsters won’t attack towns. Isn’t that convenient? Ryua-chin, what do you think?”

It seems Cynthia is ok with that reasoning.
She was shaking me to get an answer but I can’t really give her one since I don’t know much about those ‘mysteries’.
Most monsters don’t attack towns? Then why did my village get destroyed? Just thinking about it makes me boil with anger.

“The way to the Imperial Capital sure is harsh…travellers must be pretty serious about getting there.”

It seems Roel was able to guess what I had been thinking and changed the subject,

“If the floor monster wasn’t here then even a C rank adventurer’s party would be able to get through. They’d be able to escort people across this canyon.”

Gantetsu aside, how did Tolppo cross the canyon?
I’m not saying she is unskilled, but 2-3 opponents should be difficult for her.

“You can put the monsters here to sleep but there are a lot of other ways to deal with them”

Seigel’s explanation makes sense. I didn’t think of using magic in this area at all.

“Thing is, the big monkey floor monster is really dangerous. If a C rank party met up with it they would need to retreat at full speed. It’s a reckless thing to challenge, but many have still done so and lost their lives to it.

Seigel’s voice lowered at the last part, regarding the adventurers dying.

“Ri~ght Ri~ght, we weak citizens need the help of you Adventurers to pass through here.”

“When the times comes I’ll ride in like a prince on a white horse. Er, brown horse in this case.”

“Pay attention to the front.”

“Yes.”

Seigel had turned around to show us his white smile but ended up being scolded again by Cynthia.
She seems to be really strict with Seigel but gentle towards Roel and myself.

///

We let the coach run for the day, the scenery around us didn't change much until a signboard appeared.

"Oh, we finally reached Kizel Lodging!"

Beside the signboard was a stone path leading somewhere.
There was a building made out of wood with a triangle roof, it seems there will be enough space for the coach to fit.
We stopped our coach in the building and noticed all the other coaches there. It seems there are others who arrived before us.

"We're finally~ here! The food they have is delicous you know! For example, the <Pecking Bird> with teriyaki sauce! Ah~ I can't take it, I'm drooling just thinking about it!"

Is it by chance the same kind of bird we defeated on the way here?
It didn't look appetizing, but seeing Cynthia like this makes me think otherwise.

"I'm tired after all that. I'll do the check-in so you girls should enjoy the hot springs to your heart's content."

"Yes!"

Cynthia and Roel quickly entered the lodging without hesitation.

"They sure are lively…looking at them reminds me of when I was young and spry like them."

"If you're that envious of them why not just go back to active duty, Owner?"

Looking at him, you wouldn't have been able to tell he was a military type of man in his prime.
He may have been amazing when he was still active as an adventurer, just like Kozow.

"All I can manage to do on my own now is drive away monsters. It's quite lonely as of recent since they're avoiding me."

"Just as one would expect from the <Steam-Powered Fortress> Bloom. Still going as strong as before."

"I think you're the only young'un that knows that name. In reality I'm just running a lodging house, and nobody knows that I was an adventurer before this, you know?"

"Isn't that sad though? The ignorance of the innocent and the sin of illiteracy…not even knowing the greatness of their predecessors or how splendid they were as adventurers."

"Is that girl there also an adventurer? Aren't you a little young to become an escort partner?"

Bloom looked at me and laughed peacefully. I wonder if this person is still strong? <Steam-Powered Fortress>…I wonder what that means?

“Don’t take out the fruit from before, ok?”

“Sure, sure. The room you’re expecting for 3 people is this one here.”

“Ah~, if I’m in the same room as them my life would be in danger. Also, Ryua, you don’t have to be here you know. How about going to to the hot springs?”

I’ve been doing nothing but watching their exchange, but it doesn’t seem like I’m needed here. I chased after the other two who were going to the hot spring.

“Ah! Your room is number 013!”

I, no, we were saved from any embarassing moments by Seigel.
On the way there I saw a break room where a bunch of adventurers were relaxing. They were happily chatting with each other and showing off their adventurer cards to each other.
I stopped for a moment and took a peek.
It may have just been me, but one of the adventurers looks rather suspicious…
I decided to leave before I said anything.

///

“Haaa~, this is paradise…”

“Bathing in an open air bath is so refreshing…”

“Other than the one in Roel’s room, this is the first time I entered an open-air bath.”

It’s a bathtub with rocks around it and you can see a superb view while seated.
The canyons and mountains streched into the distance. It was my first time seeing nature in such a grand way.
With the steam rising up into the open air, there was a very unique atmosphere.

“Are Ryua-chin and Roel-chin living together?”

“Yeah, it’s because I don’t have a home.”

“Is~ that~ so~? Suspicious~”

She had impish smile on her face…I wonder what she meant by suspicous?
Cynthia glanced between Roel and I.

“Roel-chin’s growth is great whereas Ryua-chin’s nourishment seems to have gone to her battle strength instead of her chest, am I right?”

“W-what do you mean?”

“It’s this! This object!”

Cynthia poked Roel’s chest with her finger.

“Hii!!”

“Ooh, such a nice reaction~”

This time she grabbed Roel’s breast. It have been because Roel has been in the bath for so long, but her face was turning red.

“Just what good are they being big? When you fight they’re just a hindrance.”

“Ah, yeah, Ryua-chin you can stay as you are, they’re perfect.”

It seems like both of theirs are bigger than mine.
I’m not jealous of that though. I don’t know why Cynthia is so enamored by chests.

“Also I forgot to thank you for the jelly. Because of you guys I was able to sell a lot of <Royal Jelly>.”

“Is that so? I wanted to try some…”

“It’s not a sweet you know? It’s a recovery item that costs around 400G each.”

“Four hundred?!”

I’m not Roel but this time I slipped that line.
Saying that one cost 400G…it’s more expensive than my iron sword. I wonder just what its effects are?

“Just one is enough to fully restore your stamina and magical power. I also wanted to try some but it’s just too expensive.”

“If it’s you two, I don’t mind giving each of your one after we reach the Imperial Capital~”

“Really? I’ll do my best!”

“Hey hey! Work hard anyways! The escort reward is completely separate you know!”

Cynthia looked like she was waving her finger as she approached me.
I had expected it to happen, but blood was already rushing to my head. ‘We should get out soon’ is what I was going to say, but…

【<Raging Monkey> appeared! HP:73】

“Geeh~?! This guy is a peeping tom! A pervert! Both of you, kill it! Kill it!”

“B-b-but I didn’t bring my fire rod…”

“Fight naked~!”

“Yeah!”

“No! That’s indecent!”

Just as I was about to stand on the rock Roel pulled me by my arm.

“Why?!”

“Ryua-chan, you are also a girl you know!”

“Fine! I understand! <Plasma Shot>!”

【Ryua cast <Plasma Shot>! 】
【<Raging Monkey> received 123742 damage!】
【<Raging Monkey> was defeated! HP:0/73】

The monkey was swallowed by a ball of lightning and not even a speck of dust was left behind.

“So Ryua-chin can also use magic…you’re way too strong to be a C rank.”

“Roel, don’t hinder me again, I needed to deal with that monster, you know that.”

“Please at least be a little embarassed…you…”

Roel can carelessly say words like that, but back in the caves this kind of thing was a daily occurence. If I hesistated I would be killed.

///

“A f-floor monster attacked and then my…my comrades are…!”

As Seigel was walking to the onsen to cure his fatigue, he overheard that tidbit of information and his eyebrows twitched. An injured person had rushed into the lodging and Bloom quickly administered emergency treatement to him.
A guest at the lodge was a priest and followed up by healing his injuries. After that, the man was in a good enough condition to talk.

“Calm down, I’ll be going.”

“Are you the Dragon Hunter Seigel-san?! Why are you in such a place?….”

The gallery inside the lodging was surprised and unable to react to this news. Seigel rapidly left the lodging to avoid answering any questions.

“What can I do…? My comrades are…going to be killed…please, save them! I beg of you!”

“Seigel can do it. His strength and reputation as an A rank is no joke, you know? He doesn’t even need to form a party to defeat the floor monster. People like that are considered the elite of the A ranked adventurers.”

They were eventually able to ease the man’s worries. He had been shaking from fright, but Bloom managed to calm him down. Even so, the adventurer was still grinding his teeth.

Chapter 29 – Crossing the Kizel Canyon! Part 3

“Rick! Rick is…!”

“Rex already ran to the lodging for help! Endure until he returns!”

Its upper body had developed in a strange way, and it’s unbalanced lower body somehow supported it. More than just a big monkey, this thing had an appearance closer to a gorilla.
Its hand was stained with blood from mortally wounding the adventurer Rick who was gasping for air.
The blood on the big gorilla’s hand was spilling onto the ground and making a puddle.
Scowling faces from the adventurers were locked onto the gorilla. They felt powerless in front of this beast, unable to fight back.
The gorilla already had one of the adventurers on the ground, crushing him along with the earth.

【The <Raging Boss> attacked!】
【Era received 193 damage!】
【Era has fallen! HP:0/75】

Haruto, one of the adventurers, lost his will when he saw Era get reduced into lumps of meat.
They had been confident about being able to deal with the canyon’s monsters.
Unfortunately they had run into the floor monster. They should have retreated but they made a grave mistake and challenged it. The result was devastating.
Haruto couldn’t comprehend this massacre.

【The <Raging Boss> used <Voltage Rage>!】
【The <Raging Boss>’ attack power increased!】

The beast became excited by the situation and jumped up and down as if dancing in joy.
It threw the corpse of Rick into the canyon.
There was no need to say who the next target of the ape was.
It struck the ground with its fist, making a small quake and toppling Haruto.
The strike seemed to be a way for the <Raging Boss> to mock and scare Haruto. He could only watch as it jumped and fell towards him.

“I’m sorry you guys…this was my fault…”

“Get away from him!”

He heard a yell from an unknown voice, it seemed to come from above the large monkey.
The <Raging Boss> roared as it fell.
Seigel landed in front of Haruto, and without looking back he got into a stance to face the monster.

【Seigel attacked the <Raging Boss>! 】
【The <Raging Boss> recieved 377 damage! HP:1566/1943】

“Ah, are you…by chance the Dragon Hunter Seigel?”

“I’ll sign something for you later, right now escape to the lodge.”

Haruto felt that he could rely on Seigel due to his powerful aura and retreated to the lodge.

“Now then, you’ve rampaged long enough. Time to deliver your requiem. Here I come!”

The <Raging Boss> lost its temper at Seigel’s provocation and raised its arm.

“I also don’t want to lose to Ryua.”

Evading the monster’s fist, Seigel plunged into its chest.

“Zero-range <Burst Braver>!”

【Seigel used <Burst Braver>!】
【The <Raging Boss> received 1436 damage! HP:130/1943】

The <Raging Boss> received a direct hit from point blank, collapsing to the ground while raising a loud yell.
Its chest hair had been burnt and as it vanished it revealed burnt bones and innards.
The <Raging Boss> was unable to stand due to pain and without hesitation Seigel impaled its head with his large sword.
Taking one last breath, the <Raging Boss> stopped moving. Its death was quick.

【The <Raging Boss> was defeated! HP:0/1943】

“Now that its dead, I wonder if that guy made it to the lodge? Though I should gather the materials from this guy first since I came all the way out here…”

Seigel skillfully collected the materials from the corpse and casually walked towards the lodging.

///

Both Haruto and Rex were seated in the lobby with dejected expressions.
I really regret hearing about what happened.
We had been submerged in the hot springs, carefree and having fun while others were suffering nearby.
If Seigel hadn’t gone, Haruto would have died.

I don't want to see anybody else die.
Seeing the scene in front of me was painful.

"It's my…my fault…because I challenged that monster…"

Haruto was also deeply regretting what had happened. He was grasping his hair with his weary hand, using all of what little strength he had left to hold it.
We could only watch from the side.

"Bloom-san, is there anything we can say to them?"

"Roel-chan, they may look pitiful but they are adventurers. If you mess up judging a situation, even just a little, it could prove fatal and expose your comrades to danger. This world isn't forgiving."

He said that in a harsh tone with an unpleasant expression on his face.

"Yosh, I'm back."

Returning full of energy, Seigel had come back after defeating the floor monster.
I wonder if the luggage he was carrying was the material from it?

"So you made it back safely. I defeated that monster, just so you know."

"…thank you."

"That's that then. What you do from now on is your decision. It may not be my place to say this, but there was probably a reason behind you surviving."

"Ha? Reason…?"

With a glazed expression he looked at Seigel's face.
Rex just prostrated on the table without saying anything.

"What if I had died long ago? If that had happened the the great 'Dragon Hunter' wouldn't exist. The life I saved today would have been lost."

"What are you trying to say?"

"No matter where or when, if someone avoids an unforeseen accident and lives on then things may end up differently. Leaving behind great achievements…'What did I achieve' is something that only survivors can think about."

His speech suddenly stopped there and Seigel headed towards the hot spring.

"I may not be able to truly understand things, but live out your life for those that have died. Even I formed a party in the past only to see my comrades die before my eyes. It wasn't something that only happened once or twice. But I lived on and made this lodging. If I was able to save someone, that is enough reason for me to have survived until now.

As if he was continuing Seigel's speech, Bloom talked to the two quiet adventurers.
Both of them silently listened, but in the end something had struck a nerve and they started sobbing.

"I-I will…retire as an adventurer…"

You could see the manifestation of Haruto's decision by his tears of regret.
A comrade dying…it would be really hard for me to bear.
That's why I will absolutely protect Roel.
I won't allow a monster to lay even one finger on her from now on.
I don't want to think of parting.
Seeing the two adventurers in despair and grief is enough to make those words in my mind weigh heavily on my heart.

"Tonight's dinner will be a <Pecking Bird> hot pot. At a time like this you should warm your body and your mind. I've already finished the preparations, so gather up at the dining hall."

Bloom slowly walked towards the dining hall.
It was almost like the sorrow has taken over my legs, I had to urge them to walk.

/ / /

"That hot pot was delicious! I was able to eat 4 servings…though now I'm totally full."

"Roel, don't you think one is normally enough?"

"Bloom may have given a discount for it, but that's just a way to make you pay extra fees you know?"

"Yeah…I didn't think about that part."

The three of us were sitting in our room and chatting, though sometimes we would lay down.
But regardless of how much fun we're having while talking I can't get the incident from earlier off my mind.

"Those people…it's kind of sad. I wonder what they'll do from now on? If I was in their shoes I wouldn't be able to bear it…"

"Who knows? But since they're adventurers wouldn't they go on adventures? They go hand in hand. Those people should have the resolution to tackle this problem head on. I may sound strict, but you are your own responsibility. Only you can choose your own path."

"Even if you say that…"

Cynthia was comfortably sprawled out on the bed, you can even see a little bit of her belly.
She wasn't an adventurer, but to go so far and say that much…

“Sorry, I said too much.”

She might have been able to guess what I was thinking. Cynthia honestly apologized.
She seemed to have changed her posture from facing up. It seems like she’s trying to pretend that verbal slip never happened.

“But, Ryua-chin, you don’t need to worry. That kind of thing happening is too uncommon, we don’t have to worry.”

“Yeah, that’s right!”

Roel, who had dozing off, suddenly got up and entered the conversation.

“You don’t even need my healing powers.”

“That’s not true! The <Fire Rod> is really helpful!”

“Ryua-chin, that didn’t exactly follow up~”

The three of us laughed at the same time.
Roel, whether she’s helpful or not, I just want her beside me.
That’s why I don’t want her to worry about it.
I want to tell her that but I’m afraid she’ll take it the wrong way.

“Now we need to wake up early so we should sleep soon.”

“I’m really looking forward to seeing the Imperial Capital. I’m also curious about the <Avangard Tougi Taikai> that Seigel-san was talking about as well as the festival.”

I hugged a pillow.
I might be able to forget the incident that happened today.
Even if I don’t, I’m sure that the festival will be fun.

“If it’s Ryua-chin you can win it for sure~!…ah, but last time I think it was Tifelia-san who was the champion. If that person is there then I’m not sure…no, for sure you’ll lose.”

“Tifelia? Stronger than me?”

“Avangard’s prided S rank, <Master Knight> Tifelia! All of the S ranks have unique classes, but <Master Knight> is an exclusive class just for her. She only works for the Kingdom, she can’t go to another country. I heard that the cost of her swinging her sword just once is equal to more than the salary of all the Kingdom’s soldiers.”

“S-so there was such an amazing person…”

“I wonder if she’ll appear this time? She doesn’t really show herself in public, the last event was the first time she appeared in it. What a mystery. Maybe there was a reason for her showing up last time? If that’s the case then you can be at ease!”

Cynthia jumped from her bed and moved towards me to strike my back with all her strength.

"I'll be cheering for you, so good luck!"

For some reason Roel was stirring.
That's right, in this world there is such a strong person.
<Master Knight> Tifelia…I wonder what kind of person she is?
I don't know if I can win but I want to at least try fighting her.
Why do I feel so full of energy?
I felt fear in the <Caves of Hell> whenever I fought a formidable opponent.
I'm sure this feeling was mixed in there as well.
Even though I might have died, I wonder why I felt like this back then?
I don't understand myself sometimes.

Before I had realized it I was the only one awake.
Cynthia had gone back to sleep on her bed in the shape of "大" with her blanket on top of her.
Roel was in a more reserved sleeping position.
I should sleep as well.

I wonder how many more days we'll need to get through the Canyon?
This lodge was just the halfway point.
Yesterday I wouldn't have thought I would witness adventurers losing a comrade, but each day brings something different and unknown.
I've only been thinking about stuff like that…before I knew it was in a deep sleep.

Chapter 30 – Crossing the Kizel Canyon! Part 4

"Thank you very much for the delicious food and boarding."

"Be sure to visit again soon. Today was also an exception, that hot pot was a special service."

"…I'm sorry."

Roel had a sheepish and apologetic look on her face. Once she started eating she wouldn't stop.
She had eaten about half of the hot pot on her own.

"Now since that's done, let's start the day with high spirits! If we keep up the pace we had before getting to the lodge, we should be out of the canyon by tomorrow around noon."

"Isn't this place the halfway point? There's at least half of the journey left to go."

"You're not wrong, it is considered the halfway point, but it's really a big slowdown for people going to the Capital. The nice owner is one thing but the hot springs on top of that tend to make you want to stop there for a while, right?"

“Aaah my plan was exposed.”

Bloom was laughing with his wrinkled face.
No matter how hard I look at this person, just like Kozow, he doesn’t seem to be a former adventurer.

“Well then, lets depart! See you Bloom-sa~n!”

Cynthia was waving her arms in a wide arc and Bloom responded with the same action.
Bloom kept waving his hands from the lodge entrance as we walked away.

“The bird meat hot pot sure was delicious! Let’s visit them again.”

“That’s really the only thing you like in this entire canyon, isn’t it?”

“Hahahah…” Cynthia laughed in a reserved tone.
‘You’re not wrong’ was in my heart, agreeing with her.

The running coach suddenly stopped.
In front of the coach was a group of people in a line, as if stopping us.

“You guys, are you Bandits?”

Seigel talked to them in a familiar tone, and then one approached us.

“I’ll overlook you guys this time, our business is with that worn-out lodge.”

With those words, all of the men behind him brandished their weapons.
A spear, an axe, a bow, there were a variety of weapons. The armor they had on wasn’t that different from what I wore before I met Roel.
Their looks could use a bit…no, a lot of work.

“Such dangerous looking guys aiming at the lodge, huh? I suggest you rethink that idea, if you’re injured it’s not my fault.”

“Bastard! Don’t interfere!”

Showing off his axe, he violently thrust it into the ground.
“Oooh, sca~ry” Seigel grumbled as he pointed his big sword towards him.

“This is my last warning, don’t do it.”

“If you’re going to be a hindrance-”

Artillery had been fired into the sky…no, it was a single arrow.
It crushed the ground as it landed. Ground zero looked like a meteor had hit, impact crater and all.

“W-what just happened…?”

The bandits peered into the crater.
I immediately understood who the owner of the arrow was.
Looking behind me I saw Bloom.

“If this was set to rapid fire it’s able to sweep up a lot of monsters. Didn’t you name it <Vulcan Rain>, Seigel?”

“Who knows…”

Even Seigel drew back from <Steam Powered Fortress> Bloom’s true strength.
The bandits seemed to finally understand their situation. Some swallowed saliva in fear and others ran away screaming.
Firing a bow into the skies and hitting the ground with such impact…how did he do it?
More than just raw firepower, the bizarre technique surprised me.

“Since it’s like that, it seems we don’t have to worry about the lodging.”

The old soldier with the bow did a thumbs up to Seigel.
I think I’m more concerned about the safety of possible attackers than the lodging…
Most people would die just from being hit by one of those arrows.

“These bandits are nothing to you guys so I don’t need to worry, right? Take care.”

“Ah! Just injure the bandits!”

With such a dangerous farewell we departed for real this time.

“Bloom-san sure is strong.”

“That exchange was rather stressful and bad for my stomach, I should really be more careful…”

“Even if it wasn’t like that I would still suggest stopping.”

Both Seigel and Cynthia were surprised at how their image of Bloom had been shattered.
Now that I think about it, Mai also used a bow.
If she became Bloom’s disciple she might become a remarkable bow user.

///

“However, for someone to become a bandit in these parts…if the Capital decided to be a little serious about things the bandits would be exterminated.”

“Those people didn’t recognize Seigel-san, even though you’re famous…”

“That’s rude. It’s because they’re bandits.”

“Yeah yeah.”

I didn't really follow their conversation, let alone what Roel and Seigel agreed upon. Beside Roel was Cynthia, performing maintenance on her tools. I don't recognize most of the tools, nor am I interested in them, but Cynthia mistook my glance as curiosity. "Wait a minute" she said, and then started explaining them to me.

"This is one of the materials for a potion, a diluted liquid."

I got sleepy.
I started to fall asleep peacefully on the spot and Cynthia punched my head with all her might.

"Ow! What was that for!?"

"Oh my. Just as I thought, that hurt."

"Of course it hurts!"

"Even though you're calm and collected when a monster strikes you…strange."

"Cynthia-chan, Ryua-chan feels pain too you know! There was this one time Ryua-chan was careless and a weighing stone fell on her little toe. She really cried out!"

"I'd be shocked if Ryua-chin didn't cry out from something like that…"

It's not like monster attacks don't hurt, but as long as it isn't a serious injury or a fatal wound then it isn't a problem.
Unexpected attacks, like the one just now, hurt a lot.

The canyon road had started to slant but the horse didn't change how it walked.
We stopped for lunch and ate the box lunch Bloom had given us. 'I wonder if this smell is from a fish?' I thought, suddenly a monster attacked.
Before I could make a move Seigel was already on top of things.
He defeated the floor monster here so he should be really strong but I wonder where I got that impression from?
It was only for a brief moment, but I felt it.
I had taken a quick glance at him as he massacred the monster in an instant.
Wasn't Seigel an elite A rank?
What does elite A rank even mean, though?
When the sun had set and we set up camp, I asked him that question.

"Ah, when you become an A rank there is a ranking within the division regarding how strong you are compared to the rest. Did you know my standing as an A rank out of 102 others is 16th?"

"That's amazing."

"I don't consider it to be that amazing…"

I thought about it.
I'm still at C rank, I haven't gotten close to A rank yet.
Even getting to B rank is still far away.
Just what do we need to do to become a B rank?

"What kind of benefits are there to having a high rank?"

"The King is happy to see high ranked adventurers!"

"Is that all?"

"That's all."

"Then it's useless…"

"Ryua, there's more to it than that. You can receive many things from generous people. Being able to wander as I wish is also thanks to my rank. There will also be an important task entrusted to you."

"So I guess you ended up choosing to receive a girl? You're really the worst."

"Just how did you come to that conclusion…regarding girls, I'll have you know I'm a gentleman towards them."

I felt worried about something he said.
Even though they're adventurers, for the King to be happy is strange.
It's like they're the King's servants.

"Fuua~ today sure was tiring. I guess we should sleep soon, so good night."

Cynthia retreated into the coach and quickly fell asleep.
Roel who had been dozing off beside me was now leaning on me.

"Properly carry her to the coach. Make sure to be careful."

Seigel winked at me from where he was sitting while closing his eyes.
I didn't know how long we had stayed up but I wasn't sleepy at all.

"Then I guess I should also try to sleep."

i carried Roel to the coach to sleep, and I followed soon after.

///

Seigel and I woke up at about the same time.
A group of men had surrounded the coach.
We didn't know their exact number but there had to be more than 50.
Many of them fired arrows towards the coach, and at the same time I drew my swords to produce wind pressure and blew the arrows away.

I put enough force behind my attack to even cut the trees. A sizable amount of the attackers panicked.

“W-w-w-what?!”

“Ku! Who are you? Who is the one responsible for this attack!”

“That would be me.”

“B-boss…”

A slender man with long hair who looked out of place alongside the bandits stepped forward.
He appears to be a good looking guy. I can’t imagine him actually being able to manage these stern looking men.
The man who was called boss continued to talk to us in a strangely calm way.

“Haha, a man and a…kid. According to the information my underling gave me there should be two women but I guess they’re sleeping inside the carriage?”

“Are you…Davitz?”

Seigel asked the man a question with a confused expression on his face.
The man brushed his bangs aside and seemed irritated.

“Siegel, I didn’t expect you to be here out of all places.”

“I had been thinking that I haven’t seen you in a while. So, you became the head of bandits in this place. You’ve really fallen.”

“I’m peerless around here you know? Monsters and adventurers are nothing to me. If there is a woman then this hand will embrace them with love.”

Davitz was in a hugging pose with both of his hands.
I feel rather uneasy seeing that gesture.

“Geez…”

Seigel approached him with his large sword drawn.

“No matter your reason, it seems this situation is pretty straight forward huh?”

“Ha! I was hoping to avoid fighting you.”

While saying that Davitz drew his rapier.
The men surrounding us had finished their preparations to attack the coach.

“That’s right. Seigel, weren’t you recently gravely injured and nearly passed away?”

"…how did you know?"

"S-e-c-r-e-t~"

He was smiling like a fool with his index finger over his mouth in a 'ssshh' gesture. Bandits are pretty cold hearted.

"Do it."

The bandits let the blood rush to their head an all attacked at once.
I sighed at the situation.
They're just too slow.
So many wasted movements…do they think they can win this way?
In the <Caves of Hell> any wasted movement usually meant death.
I trained myself to never overlook an opening.
If these bandits entered that place they would last mere seconds before getting annihilated.
A bandit's livelihood is from stealing, but like this they couldn't steal a life.
But regardless of the amount of enemies, I can't kill them. Instead I ran around hitting their heads lightly.
They collapsed to the ground one by one.
Even though I just need to make contact with them it seems I accidentally added in some force.
Their faces were crashing into the ground, unable to move in the growing pile of bodies.
I didn't want to kill anyone, but my worries were quickly eased once I saw them twitching.
They'll live.

【Ryua-chan attacked!】
【All the bandits fainted!】

We had been encircled by bandits the whole time, but they suddenly all collapsed.
Davitz looked around to figure out what happened. His mouth was wide open, shocked at the scene in front of him.

"What the hell just happened!?"

I don't think he included me in his calculations.
His plan seemed to be overpowering us with sheer numbers, clearly he didn't expect it to fail.

"Are you sure it's not just a trick?"

Even though Seigel didn't subdue the bandits he had a boastful expression.
He had kept his stance with his sword the whole time.
I wonder if he plans on fighting Davitz in the end?

"Give up. If you do it right now I'll plead your case to make your punishment as light as possible."

"No matter what I do, there isn't a way for me to live…!"

His hair became disheveled and he unleashed consecutive strikes against Seigel.
His attacks weren't even able to graze.

"Davitz, why are you doing such things?"

"Are you an idiot!? No matter what we achieve we are just the King's property! We, as adventurers, should have more pride! We should have freedom!"

"You have pride as a thief?"

Davitz was desperately hitting Seigel persistently with high speed attacks. As he pulled back to ready his next attack, it instantly flew at Seigel again, almost like a spring. The speed that this attack had was incomparable to the previous ones.

"<Spring Thrust>!"

As the rapier clashed with Seigel's large sword it shattered.
Davitz's special attack was easily blocked. Seigel's sword was stabbed into the ground while he had a humble pose behind it.
In reaction to this, Davitz brought up his arms in a fist fighting stance.

"Are you not done yet?"

"Even if my sword is broken I just need to use my hands and adapt myself to the situation. That's how I am."

"That's right, you always were a sore loser."

I walked between the two of them.
I wonder if Davitz was wary about me, he moved back as if scared.

"Just stop it already."

"Move out of the way, girl!"

"If you stop now then I won't have to fight you."

"Shut up! <Blaze Shot!>!"

He suddenly cast an intermediate magic. Even though he isn't a wizard, nor is his specialty magic, the power of this spell was incomparable to Tolppo's version.
Coming from an A rank, it was dreadfully hot.
But these flames won't burn me.
Just before the flames touched me they were extinguished.

【Davitz cast <Blaze Shot>!】
【Ryua received no damage!】

"Are you an A rank!?"

“She’s C rank, actually. I don’t stand a chance against her either.”

“For the Dragon Hunter to fall like that… to this kid…<Sleep Hold>!”

He tried to cast a sleeping magic, but it has no effect on me so his shout only echoed into the distance. Such things won’t affect me.

“Are you done yet?”

“There is still much more I can do! I will show you the fruit of my training!”

“Just give up already…”

I struck Davitz’s head.
A light sound was heard and his body jolted. He collapsed as if crumbling to the floor.

“Seigel-san, what are we doing with these guys?”

“It’s troublesome but we’ll have to hand them over to the Kingdom. We can’t just leave them here either.”

Seigel looked troubled while glancing over the fallen men. He let out a long sigh.

“Don’t try to run you guys. We’re almost at the Imperial Capital.”

“Shit…to end up attacking the famous Dragon Hunter of all people…”

Walking together in a group, every member of the bandits could be heard cursing and complaining.
Since we don’t have a way to restrain this many people, Seigel and I are just keeping an eye on them as we walk.
If one of them does something odd then I will immediately subdue them, but watching them is more tiring than I thought.

“If any of you try and escape, we will practice the fainting course together again. Ok?”

Clap clap Seigel was clapping.
Even though I defeated them, I’m pretty sure they think Seigel did it.
They didn’t understand what happened since it was all over so quickly, but they assumed Seigel had subdued them all since he was a famous adventurer. I tried to explain it to them but I was ignored.

“Since my name is so famous it’s not surprising that they would come to that kind of conclusion, so please be understanding of that.”

I won’t get mad about something like this since I’m an adult.

“The weak guys are the only ones that don’t know Ryua-chin beat them.”

“It would’ve been dangerous if the two of you weren’t here…”

Cynthia and Roel had both slept through the uproar last night so they had no idea what had happened.

“Just relax, Ryua. I will make sure to put in a good word for you. With that your value as an adventurer will increase.”

“I’m really not bothered by it.”

I planned to say that calmly but it seems some of my anger towards Seigel leaked out.
“Kuku”, Seigel chuckled softly.
Next to Seigel was someone dragging their feet.

“Your name is Ryua, right? I can’t believe a kid like you has that much strength.”

“It’d be better for you to train and get strong like her.”

I was offended that Davitz called me a kid and retorted.

“Davitz, I still don’t understand why you’d become a bandit.”

“Oh, looks like someone has come to meet us.”

A group of people wearing armor approached us.
There were a lot of them, compared to the bandits this number was overwhelming.
They were marching in formation, and upon reaching us they stopped.

“Oya, oya, thanks for the effort! Are you perhaps going to subjugate bandits? It’s admirable for the Kingdom to be moving already.”

“It’s as you say, Dragon Hunter Seigel-dono. I didn’t expect you to have already captured that man…”

“Ah, omitting the details, I know it’s sudden but can you take charge of this guy?”

“Understood.”

I got to see their prowess immediately. They tied up the bandits quickly to the point where they couldn’t move anything but their head and neck, all in less than a few minutes. Each bandit had an iron ring placed on their neck, and once those were connected they were formed into a long line.

“Now, walk quickly!”

The bandits were treated roughly while the soldiers were yelling, keeping them in line as they all walked.

“Thank you very much, Seigel-dono. Oh, that’s right, how about taking this chance to ride

with us to the Capital?”

“It’s fine. I’ll pass. I feel at ease riding on that coach.”

“Is that so? Then we’ll be on our way. I will make sure I report this matter quickly as possible.”

“Ah, take care.”

The soldiers left with the captured bandits and quickly disappeared from sight.
While I had been lying down on the cliff I saw a large horse pulling a huge wooden carriage into the distance.
It was 10 times as big as our carriage, I wonder if the soldiers rode in that?

“W-what’s that!? I’ve never seen anything like it!”

“That is a carriage owned by the Avangard Kingdom. It’s pulled by a <Gigas Horse>, a gentle and obedient creature, but its true strength is incomparable to the floor monster here.”

“Hmmm~…never heard anything about that before.”

“It’s also my first time seeing one.”

Roel and I were both staring at the rare animal as it disappeared. Seigel started running the coach again, as if chasing them.

“It’s considered priceless to have when going on an expedition. The carriage has everything you could possibly need to survive, and the supply it can hold could sustain someone for many months.”

“If that’s the case, wouldn’t have accepting their offer been fine!”

“Just relax, you won’t grow otherwise.”

“Those aren’t related at all!”

Cynthia was cursing Seigel behind his back as he did a sidelong glance towards me.
He isn’t wrong though, as adventurers we need to pass through this canyon on our own. No exceptions.

After meeting with the soldiers the monster attacks slowed down. Before long we arrived at the ridge before our last stop.
Passing through the deep valleys, a steep slope was spread before us. We could see a large flowing river going through the canyon.
There was a bridge spanning the river, and just beyond it was a carpet of green. It was the grasslands leading to the Avangard Kingdom.

“Ya~ we finally made it. Ladies, that there is the Avangard Imperial Capital!”

“So big~…I wonder how much larger it is than Kwimill?”

“Ryua-chin, over there is the sea you know?”

Cynthia pointed to the coast where many ships were anchored. I wonder if you need to go to the Capital to ride the boats? The world on the other side of the sea…I wonder what it’s like.

“Seigel-san, how are we getting down from here?”

“Well, the slope is really steep so we will have to take a detour.”

We travelled to the left and moved out of the canyon, avoiding the slope altogether.
We haven’t seen the carriage that the soldiers left on yet.
I thought it would be slower since it was such a large coach.

“Once we arrive at the Capital the escort quest will be complete. I suggest we go straight to the guild to complete the paperwork.”

“We’ve only been together for a short while so we’ll part ways there okay?”

“Cynthia-san, it was fun.”

“I’ll be sad as well…at any rate we are still-”

“Just shut up, you.”

Seigel was treated harshly right up to the end. As we reached the base of the slope we saw something flying at us from the sky.

【A swarm of <Vulture Beetle> appeared! HP:88】

It was a very strange monster that attacked us this time. It had the body of an insect but also the wings of a bird.
We hadn’t seen a creature like this in the canyon, but it most likely is one that appears here.

“Since it’s so different from the other monsters in the canyon, many beginners tend to be confused.”

Seigel fired off a <Blast Braver> without hesitation and obliterated the swarm. He still had a firm grip on the reins.
One could hear the sound of hoofbeats and wheels turning as we travelled. We still had a little ways to go to reach the Capital.

As we passed over the bridge we saw many people with varied appearances going back and forth. From what Seigel told us, this bridge has always been called the Avangard Bridge.

“Hora! You bumped into someone and that’s all you do?!”

“Haa…but I have already apologized…how annoying.”

“Did I hear you mutter something at the end there!?”

As we approached the middle of the bridge we saw a young woman, a man with a physique similar to Grundom, and a thin man with a mouse like face picking a fight.

“Oh boy. What a common sight.”

“Don’t just say that, let’s help them!”

“I suggest you don’t. Calm down.”

“What are you saying? If Seigel won’t do it, I will!”

Ignoring Seigel who was staying still, I covered the woman and stood in the way of the two men. Both were surprised at how fast I appeared in front of them.
Neither are going to be trouble, it seems.

“W-what are you doing, making me flinch like that huhhhh!?”

“Hey bro, it seems that this kid is eager.”

“Eager, huh!? A KID is? Are you?!”

They were really noisy. Their voices are too loud, I could hear them just fine without them shouting.

“I would forgive you if you apologized.”

“Soooo! You’re saying you can do something to ME!?”

“Bro, isn’t just nice timing? A warm up just before the Tougi Taikai.”

“Hey kid! Have you heard of the C rank <Metal Rod> Konbo-sama?”

Nope. Never. He’s also just a C rank like myself.
Why is he doing this even though he’s an adventurer…?

“Ryua-chan, you need to do it peacefully and get it over with…”

I hadn’t realized that Roel had come running to my side.
And suddenly, that man came flying at me with his metal rod.

“Don’t just ignore MEEEEEE!”

He swing his metal rod downwards at me.
It was like styrofoam. I did an upper towards the rod and pulverized the top part.

“Aaan? AAAAAAAN?!”

“U-um, Ryua-chan didn’t have any ill intent. If we did any more than this you would be injured, so could you please leave?”

Bows Roel bowed, it seemed sarcastic.
No, she didn’t mean ill at all.
Just bowing, believing that it’s the right thing to do right now.

“B-b-bro, this girl is a monster…hiiiiiiii!”

The mouse-faced guy ran away at full speed, leaving his Bro behind.

“Y-y-you! Join the Tougi Taikai! I’ll show you my real power there!”

He ran away with those parting words.

“So those people are also joining the Tougi Taikai…”

“Will you join in as well?”

The woman came to me and asked.

“Yeah…ah, you are not injured right?”

The woman hadn’t moved a single step during the encounter. She just stood behind me.

“Is that so…you’re also participating…what should I do?…how annoying. *sigh*”

She held her cheek with her hand and did nothing but sigh.
She had straight white hair and a mysterious atmosphere about her.
She looked older than us and had the image of an adult woman.

“Thank you very much for helping me. Well then, see you…”

Her long white hair fluttered along with the wind as she walked towards the Capital.

“She sure was a peculiar person.”

“Even though I said it would be fine…don’t just meddle with people. Anyway, let’s hurry and get to the Capital.”

“Unnecessary…what do you mean?”

“Aaah I’m already tired…but once we get there I want to sell Royal Jelly! Ah, I forgot! Here you go, you two!”

A glittering gold jelly was handed to us.
It doesn’t seem like a recovery item, just looking a this jelly is stimulating my appetite.
Though I’ll hang on to it in case of an emergency.

"*Slurp*…Ryua-chan, what should I do?"

"I'll hang onto this."

She was really drooling over it. I wonder if she can endure the temptation…
I don't mind if she eats it, but if we end up needing it later…
Since I can't use recovery magic I wouldn't be able to heal Roel by myself.

"Hey, don't just stand there. Let's go!"

Cynthia tapped me and I came back to reality. Right, we still need to make it to the Capital.
What should I do first when I get there?
Has the Festival started yet?

"After we finish our business at the guild we need to find an inn, right?"

Right, the guild and then an inn. Roel hasn't looked away from the jelly yet.

///

"Only now…*sigh*…"

"Thank you very much for returning."

"Ritta-chan, you really exaggerate that greeting every time…just an ordinary 'welcome back' is fine, you know. *sigh*…saying something like that, how annoying."

"I-I'm very sorry."

"Your usage of those words is odd…*sigh*"

Ritta was a novice soldier, but she's too loud and too dazzling a person. She had been yearning to become a soldier of the Avangard Kingdom, so she volunteered to become one. It was praiseworthy that she wasn't defeated by the harsh enlistment exam, and after passing she trained with all her might. She still hasn't lost her vigor.
As a female colleague all I can do is stay relaxed, but I'm pretty miserable right now.
Ritta only admires a single person, a woman standing at the top of the Kingdom.

"It's Ritta-chan's day off, it would have been fine for you to go and have fun…"

"No. If I don't spend my time training I feel like I'll be left behind and defeated…"

"Even so, swinging your spear in the castle courtyard…someone will get mad you know… *sigh* talking is annoying…"

"You've got a point…I'll do it in my room from now on."

"It's too annoying to reply to that…*sigh*"

Ritta saw off the sluggish person and carried her spear to her room.
With the pay of a novice soldier she was somehow able to pay rent for the room.
There was a bed, desk, and drawers, but the best part was the shower.

“Tifelia-san sure was cool today…”

Inside her room holding a spear, she was dripping with water and in a world of delusion.
She ended up being able to practice by shadowboxing in her room.

“Master Knight Tifelia…someday I would like to be like her.”

Ritta was so absorbed into her shadowboxing that she failed to remember she was in her room. Her favorite plate had been placed on a shelf located above her desk, and while she was brandishing her weapon she knocked it over and it shattered upon hitting the ground.
Negative thoughts pervaded her mind at that moment, rapidly destroying the mood she had earlier.

“Aaaah…am I useless after all?”

Monster Book

【Raging Monkey HP:73】
A ferocious monkey that lives in <Kizel Canyon>.
Due to its strength and physique, many beginners end up being buried by it.
It also likes to steal luggage so be careful.

【Pecking Bird HP:49】
A hyena bird of the <Kizel Canyon>.
There weren’t many of them that attacked humans in the beginning, but they adored the taste of flesh and began to attack everyone who passed through the canyon.
Its beak is strong enough to pluck the meat out of a human.

【Slash Cat HP:42】
An abandoned cat that changed form due to living in a severe environment for so long.
It’s much larger than a normal cat, and its claws can easily rend cheap armor.

【<Vulture Beetle> HP:88】
Its appearance is something like a fusion of an insect and a bird.
Due to its strength is violently attacks from the sky.

【<Raging Boss> HP:1943】
It leads the <Raging Monkeys>, the boss of the <Kizel Canyon>.
It crushes the dreams of adventurers with its fist.
As it gets excited its destructive power increases.
You can call it the Untouchable of the <Kizel Canyon>.
Adventurers that encounter it run away at full speed until they’re exhausted.

Full Text Arc 6

Arc 6, *Tournament Arc*!

Chapter 41 was missing all of the <> terms, it has been fixed both here and on the post. This is why we switched…

Chapter 32 – My Pride

The road ahead of us was wide enough for a lot of people to walk on it at once.
Thing is, there were so many people that I can't move around easily.
If someone bumped into you they would just click their tongue and move on.
The buildings here were about 4 or 5 floors tall, and the gaudy shops were so over the top you couldn't tell what they sold.
Even so, this place has a pretty townscape.
It's a large enough city that you may not find your way back to your inn if you got lost.
That's how I feel about this place, the Imperial Capital.

"Well then, we'll part ways here. That was a good journey."

"Yes. Thank you very much, for various things."

Seigel waved his right hand at us as he walked away.
He was a conceited guy right up to the end.
Though it seems Roel somehow admires him.
I won't lose.

"Let's go to the festival now! I'm pretty sure the street stalls are somewhere around here."

Cynthia disappeared into the crowd as she said that.

"Well then…let's go to the guild and get this settled."

"Good idea. I wonder if we've reached B rank?"

We need to hurry and reach B rank.
I need to be at least A rank to get into Ikana Village.
Relying on the map Seigel gave us we headed to the Adventurers Guild.
We wandered for a while without finding it. Somehow we had passed it without noticing.
The door wasn't the same as the one Kwimill's guild had, instead of a small wooden door it was a 3 meter wide glass door.
It looked like a 5 floor hotel from the outside.
Upon entering we saw a large counter manned by many staff members.
Kwimill only had one person, Rintei, working while this place had an innumerable amount.
Roel looked like her soul had been extracted.
Of course she would be surprised at this.
…No wait, she's just looking at the Royal Jelly.

She was doing just fine earlier…

“The escort quest from Kwimill? Yes, this way please. This is your reward for completing it.”

I’m glad that we got the reward, but I still haven’t heard the important part.

“How much more do we need to reach B rank?”

“Aah?”

He seemed really annoyed as he looked over a bunch of papers.
This person was really blunt, unlike the polite Rintei.

“Did you just reach C rank? You need to get at least three times as many achievements to reach B rank.”

“Achievements?”

“Yes, yes. Now move that way please, the person behind you is waiting.”

His hands were doing the “shoo, shoo” motion as he drove us away.
What’s with that guy? Why was he so rude?

“It seems we were slowing things down. There’s a lot of people waiting.”

Adventurers were lining up behind us, and we could see lines of them waiting on the counters on either side of us.

“This quest is for B ranks, we just need to enter a mountain and get some mithril ore. No problem.”

“Yosh, it was worth rising up to B rank!”

There were three men and a woman in a party all talking in an amicable tone.
They’ve reached B rank while we’re still C rank.
Just what kind of achievement did they accomplish?

“That’s right! Ryua-chan, it’s been a long time since we last measured our levels. Perhaps you’ll be able to figure out your level now!”

“Ah. You’ve got a point. Let’s see, which way is it?”

There were too many passageways so I couldn’t tell which way it was.
Roel just started walking, it doesn’t seem like she minds getting lost.
It’s her first time here as well but she seems to know the way.

“You can see signboards on the ceiling, they tell you where to go.”

Now that she mentions it, I notice something written up there.

I don't understand the characters since I can't read.
I was only recently able to grasp the basics of the written language but I still can't read very much.
I'm really bad at studying. I get attacked by sleepiness when I start.

We entered a room where a large number of <Level Checker>s were lined up. This amount is incomparable to what we saw in Kwimill. I had been calling them iron boxes so far since that's what they looked like, but apparently they have a name.

"Level 34!? Even though I'm as strong as an A rank…"

The adventurer seemed disheartened from the <Level Checker>s result.
I wonder if that person is also B rank?

"How about taking the A rank Status Up examination this year? You worked hard since last year in preparation right?

The person's friend talked about the examination I heard about before.
For some reason I feel a chill when I hear about the examination.

"You've got a point…but you know, passing or failing that test doesn't really reflect the examinee's capabilities. Even though I'm not an A rank I'm still a splendid adventurer."

"That train of thought will keep you at B rank for a long time."

Saying that, a man came out from the <Level Checker> beside the two people with a cold stare.
His muscles are big but not quite as large as Grundom's.
He had an intimidating and stiff face, his eyes were narrow, and his mouth was in a "へ" shape.

"Geh! It's Hekaton the <Crusher>…"

"With such a renowned A rank entering the Tougi Taikai tomorrow it really makes you rethink your chances of winning…I can at least hope to enter the semi-finals."

On Hekaton's back there was a massive hammer.
It has more impact than Gantetsu's axe.

"That's impossible for you guys."

The two adventurers couldn't rebuke his words.
I must be mortifying to hear someone say something like that to you.

"Let's see…my level is…54? Looks like it increased again."

He seemed disappointed as he said that. I can't remember if his name was Hekaton or Dokapon but just because he's an A rank doesn't mean you should be allowed to brag so

much.
Well, since once of the people he mocked had said “many years” he’s probably been A rank for a while.

“If you’re more than just talk, enter the Tougi Taikai. The reception desk is open till late tonight so you have time. Though since you’re a B rank with no nerve I wonder if you’ll muster up the courage by then? Hahahahaha!”

Hekaton walked away with heavy steps as he spouted those words.

“That was surprising…I didn’t expect someone like the <Crusher> to be here.”

“Roel, do you know that guy?”

“He’s one of the elite A rankers, same as Seigel but not as strong. He’s still famous though. That hammer of his is made of orihalcon and can smash even magic barriers, hence his nickname <Crusher>. I haven’t heard many rumors about him though…”

“Due to that it seems he’s very conceited.”

Though, we’ve spent enough time here. Where is that reception desk again?
Since I’m entering the Tougi Taikai I need to sign up at the desk or else I can’t participate…

“Roel, I need to sign up at the reception desk for the event, right?”

“Yup. Let’s see…I’m sure it was on the way to the castle…”

We checked the pamphlet we had recieved earlier to confirm where the castle was.
It only had a map but the Imperial Capital was so big it could make you dizzy. There was sectors like A and B, and although I understood terms like that, just sector A alone was bigger than Kwimill.
Let’s see, from the guild which is here to our destination which is there we need to turn here and then…

“Agh! I give up!”

“Hold on, don’t just throw away the pamphlet…”

I realized I could hear laughter. It was the two adventurers from earlier.

“For your own sakes, don’t enter the Tougi Taikai this year. It’s just a warning out of concern for you, but it’s honestly a waste of time. Since even elite A rank adventurers are entering, lower ranked people such as yourselves don’t have a chance. On top of that, even though the rules prohibit killing you can still be severely injured to the point where you may never walk again, or your hand may become nonexistent. People end up like that every year. Wouldn’t just watching to learn be an adequate replacement?”

The older adventurer kindly warned us about the event.

But even knowing all that, I still want to enter.

"What's your level? Hekaton is the most likely to win unless another high ranked adventurer enters as well."

"Ah, level…"

'Level'…as I heard him ask me that I recalled the other reason for coming here.
I should measure myself quickly.

As the circle of light passed through my body, I noticed it seemed much faster than the one we used at Kwimill.
My level should show up any moment now…

Ah…eh?

"Ryua-chan, how did it go?"

"A-ah well you see, it's…999…"

"Ni-ni-nine hundered and ninety nine?"

"Yeah, this is high right? Since Hekaton was only 54…"

Suddenly a crowd gathered around us and silence fell upon the room.

"Hey, the max level this <Level Checker> can measure is 999 right?"

"Well yeah, we have no reason to go higher since only S ranked adventurers are over level 100…truth is 2 digits should've been enough."

"Maybe it's broken? We should call someone to fix it."

Broken again?
Only when I use it?
Though it only showed overflow at Kwimill, it was written properly this time…?

"Ryua-chan, I believe in you…"

It seems she could guess how I felt. Roel was grasping my hand tightly.
A staff member quickly showed up to inspect the machine.

I fought for ten years without a break in the <Caves of Hell>.
That achievement alone is my pride.
I don't want it to be sullied.

"No matter where I look, there isn't a single abnormality. We can take it for a closer inspection."

The guild staff member quickly returned with my adventurer card.
999 was clearly written on it.
The old guy near us saw it and had a face that showed pure disbelief.

“That is definitely a mistake. The staff will be able to fix it though, so don’t worry.”

“Shut up.”

If you aren’t going to believe it then just keep it to yourself.
I was extremely bitter about the reaction this was getting so I quickly left the room and exited the guild building.
Roel chased me, flustered.

Tougi Taikai is more important than all this.
When I appear at the tournament they won’t believe my level is actually that high anyways.
Onwards to the castle…

“Ryua-chan, it’s this way.”

Roel was leading me. Even though I could see the castle from far away it was a fruitless effort.
I noticed shops were set up here and there on the road. Are they preparing for the festival?
There was a tall stone wall surrounding the castle, about ten times as tall as a house. I was thoroughly fascinated by it.
The entrance to the castle had a large bridge spanning a river with two guards standing on the opposite side.

“Why is there a river and bridge here?”

“It’s called a drawbridge. If you pull the rope for it, the bridge rises up. It’s a countermeasure for invasions and attacks.”

“Hee~ so it will rise if you pull on it?”

It seemed kind of sloppy but it’s easy to understand.
While I crossed the bridge I noticed something that looked like a rope.
The soldiers moved in front of us to stop us from entering, it seems they misunderstood our intentions.
Roel clarified that we were going to enter in the Tougi Taikai.

“So you’re participating? If you’re looking for the reception desk it’s just inside.”

There was a large crowd in the middle of the hall.
I wonder if that’s where the desk is?

“Since I’m not entering you should get in line, Ryua-chan.”

“Ah, right.”

There were 3 soldiers working the reception desk.
The variety of people here was astonishing. Some looked like adventurers and there were some that looked like the bandits from before.
Among these people was a woman who was wearing barely anything, her revealing upper armor looked really embarassing.

"Please fill in the necessary information here."

I recalled my first day in the outside world, crying in the guild hall.
I'm different now though, I can write this time.
I've grown up! I can finally show the results of my training!

"Yes, let's see here…Ri, Riyuwa? Is that how you read it? Adventyurer? You meant adventurer right? I was hoping this would be more readable but it is what it is…"

I heard someone stifling laughter with 'pfft'.
I should have written everything properly though…oh wait, it should have been written Adven[tu]rer…

"It's like the writing of a child…wait, aren't you a kid!?"

The adventurer beside me was stealing glances and laughing at me.
How mortifying…even though I studied so hard…

"Ryua-chan, just ignore it."

Roel gently patted my shoulder to comfort me. Her kindness helps me a lot.
Thank you, Roel. You are really too nice.

"So now that we're entered it looks like the preliminary round will start early tomorrow morning. We need to hurry."

"I wonder who'll appear in the preliminaries?"

"Well it seems like the final selection for the tournament is eight people, but it's all decided through the preliminary rounds."

"That's all? So I just need to win. I was worried for a moment."

It doesn't seem like there's some special task to complete.
I don't know if I'll be able to win the tournament but if it's just fighting I should be fine.

"Hou, it looke like we got 397 people this year. That's more than last time!"

"Ah, captain! Thank you very much for your hard work!"

The three soldiers stood at attention and greeted the man they called 'captain' as he returned the pose.

T-that is the captain…isn't he the person who showed up when I was attacked by that mysterious monster in Kwimill!?
So he's in charge around here huh…

"Let's see here…I wonder if Tifelia is participating this time? Well, considering how she is, she would think tournament is too annoying and barely made it time to enter."

"If Tifelia-dono participates in the tournament then the champion is already decided…"

"Oh…"

It seems that the captain noticed me but he immediately turned his gaze away.
I was curious if it really had been him that night so I gave in and asked.

"Hey, you were there that night right?"

"Hmm? What night? You've mistaken me for someone else."

"Liar, it was definitely…"

I recalled holding a bag of money that night.
'Forget about this' were his parting words.
So…that was in exchange to stay silent?

"Ryua-chan do you know him…?"

"No, I don't. Let's head back to the inn."

It ended up being awkward. I looked like I was running from the castle. Are things fine like this?
That monster, why did they want to hide it so bad? Knowing what I do…I feel something ominous regarding that captain.

【Ryua | Lv: 999 | Class: Sword Fighter | Rank: C】
【Roel | Lv: 16 | Class: Healer | Rank:C】

/ / /

"Is that girl going to participate?"

Kirkton had noticed two female adventurers leaving the castle.

"Eh? Well, they did finish their entry."

"Is that so…"

Saying that, Kirkton rotated on his heel and walked away.
He had relief and fear on his face. It was a complicated expression.

“That was an unusual thing for Captain Kirkton to say.”

“Yeah, that was somewhat strange…”

Two of the soldiers were curious about their captain’s attitude towards those adventurers. It was really abnormal for him.
Anyone entering the castle would naturally be signing up so why would the captain ask something so obvious?
Neither of the men could figure it out.

“So that kid is participating…the one that defeated that monster…”

But there was one soldier who knew why the captain acted like he did.
However, his murmur was drowned by the din in the entry hall, remaining unheard by his comrades.

Chapter 33 – Avangard Tougi Taikai Part 1

As we left the inn, we realized the town had changed. It was now flashy, showy, and busy.
Along the street, there were many shops all lined up.
A tent had been prepared for what seems like a fortune teller, and a shop emitting a sweet and delicious smell, there were so many shops with different yet attractive things..

“Spit-roasted <Pecking Bird>! 20g per piece! How about it?”

“Flavored shaved ice! How about some?!”

“Paparando region’s specialty, Squid Ink Tentacle Yakisoba! You can only eat it now!”

It seems all these shops are trying to advertise at once. I really don’t get it.
As I was walking, I heard my name called by a frantic voice. I have a bad feeling about this.
I turned around to greet Roel, who had her hands full with food; she couldn’t eat anything like that.

“Ryua-chan, carry this one!”

While she had me hold onto the yakisoba she scarfed the shaved ice and ten spit-roasted birds.
Just as I thought she was finished her snack she moved onto the next target.
It’s difficult to walk due to the amount of people but at least this kind of festival is refreshing.
I was never able to really leave Kwimill so all of these new sights are fascinating.

Suddenly a shop caught my attention.
If you knock merchandise over from a distance using a toy bow you get to keep it.
Is it really that simple? Yosh, I’ll do it!

“Something this simple…tei!”

The arrow missed by a large margin.
Once more!

“Roel, I want that sword <Ice Brand>! I’ll get it eventually!”

I thought that it would be an easy hit because of its size, but suddenly the bow broke in my hands.

“T-t-this…I’m very sorry.”

“No, it’s fine. I’m prepared for things like this, it’s no problem. Though, Ojou-chan, you really do have terrible aim. In the 5 years that I’ve run this shop I have never seen something like this.”

“Ryua-chan is purely strength after all.”

Roel declared that nonchalantly while chewing the gold apple candy she had in both hands.
I ended up challenging the game 5 times but I never hit the sword once.
I was so mortified I wanted to cry, but the owner seemed to sympathize with me and gave me a recovery item as a consolation prize.

“Using a bow is pretty difficult…Mai is amazing for being able to hit moving monsters.”

“Ryua-chan, besides using a sword you’re totally hopeless…”

Her words stabbed into me.
By the way, Roel had challenged the game twice and was able to hit an item with a magic ice effect as well as a royal jelly.
The jelly was already deep inside Roel’s stomach.
It’s possible that Roel has some talent with the bow.
Wouldn’t she have more ways to fight if she seriously practiced with it?

“Hi~ you two lovely girls over there! Why not take a look at my shop for a while?”

Just like she declared yesterday, Cynthia had set up a shop.
She has recovery items, royal jelly, and some things I have no clue about all line up in a row.

“Cynthia-san, what kind of shop is this?”

“A shop for adults.”

“Oh.”

“Ku! I was expecting your face to turn red! You pure person!”

“What’s a shop for adults anyways?”

There are times I don’t understand Cynthia.
Whenever I try to ask about the ‘adult shop’ she avoids the topic. Since there isn’t anything

here that looks like food Roel wasn't too keen on looking around. The only exception was the jelly.

"Royal jelly, 200g each is a steal!"

"Expensive…Ryua-chan, let's go that way."

"W-what?"

Cynthia had been expecting Roel to buy some but she just turned away and pulled my hand.
It's seems finances are more important than her appetite.
She's been eating a lot here and ther though…will it be fine?

"Ah, that's right! The Tougi Taikai!"

"Waaaaah! That's right! C-can we still make it?!"

"20 minutes…"

"If we walk we won't make it…okay!"

I carried Roel on my back.

"W-w-what!? Ryua-chan!"

Roel clung onto me as I jumped on the roof of a house.
Jumping from roof to roof I aimed for the castle.

"What's that!? Part of the festival?"

"Ama~zing!"

"Hold me!"

The people below us seemed like they were cheering but I couldn't care less.
'Hold me', I don't know why someone would say that.
Roel tightly held onto me while staying quiet.

"Ryua-chan, this is embarrassing…"

"We'll be there soon, just hold on."

We reached the castle in about 5 minutes.
I landed in front of the two guards and they brandished their weapons in surprise.

"Y-you people are?"

"I'm a participant in the Tougi Taikai."

"S-so that's it. If you are participating go to the left entrance."

The soldier gave me directions for being both a contestant and a spectator.
There seemed to be a fence dividing the two with long lines on both sides.

"Um, please don't butt in line~! Please do- mugi!"

A short female soldier was swallowed up by the crowd as she tried to guide them.
With a small build like hers it would be pretty hard to fight back if you were pushed.

"Ah, are you a participant? The entrance is -gyu!"

She was taken by the crowd again as she tried to guide me.
You could only see her red hair popping out of the crowd here and there.
Some other soldiers dragged her out of the sea of people and chewed her out for a while.
The girl hung her head in shame.

"I wonder if she's the same age as us? Regardless, what's up with the soldiers here?"

"She was scolded pretty hard…it seemed serious."

'Do your best!' I thought. I had separated from Roel and followed the route for participants.
The waiting room had already filled up with the other contestants.

"This is just for the preliminaries, right?"

"Yo, just as I thought! You came!"

Metal-whatever was here. The weapon I broke yesterday had been repaired.
…Actually it just seems to be a new one.

"My stomach was acting up back then so don't let it get to your head! Look, the B block contestants work out perfectly!"

"B block? What's that?"

"A-aah?"

thump Metal-whatever was on the ground.

"Ah, my name is written here."

"Y-yeah…"

"What's with this weird net like thing drawn here?"

"Seriously? Listen up, since your name is written here and 'Benkei' is written there, your first opponent will be him. If you win against him then you will fight whoever won over here."

"Hee~"

“Did you sign up without even knowing that…?”

“The village I lived in when I was younger never had anything like this. And since my parents are also dead…”

“I-Is that so…I’m sorry.”

Suddenly metal-whatever became kind. I wonder where the wild part of him went?

“Don’t worry too much about not knowing these things. Ryua, right? Unfortunately your opponent is me, Benkei.”

Behind us appeared a young looking person carrying a lot of weapons on his back and he was wearing a muffler on his shoulder.
He had really large and baggy armor on, it looks like it’d be really hot to wear.

“Geh! A ranked <Thousand Devices> Benkei!”

“Are both of you C rank? Bloody tournament officials, not declining amateurs. If you’re just here to test your strength, forfeit.”

“Just having a lot of weapons doesn’t make you strong you know.”

“W-what did you say? You, don’t you know my name!? Benkei the <Thousand Devices>!”

“Did you forget your crushing defeat last year?”

A hand was placed on Benkei’s shoulder. Hekaton appeared behind him.

“He-hekaton…”

“Shouldn’t you say Hekaton-san? You low tier A rank.”

“Uuu…”

Hekaton showed up and butted into our conversation like that. Mere moments passed before the room fell silent and all eyes were looking at us.

“So…are you Ryua?”

“I-I am”

Hekaton suddenly turned towards me.
He has a pretty big body, but Grundom’s is still larger.

“…so Seigel lost to a kid. The elite A rank doesn’t mean much it seems.”

“Wait, just now, what…?”

“We will now begin the preliminary round. All contestants in the first match for each block

please come this way.”

A soldier announced that in a loud voice. First match…ah that’s me.

“Now then, I look forward to seeing you in action.”

Benkei looked at me and laughed like I was a fool.
I don’t know what he meant by ‘seeing me in action’ but I know that he was making light of me.
I’ll make you see…

/ / /

It seems like the grounds were specially set up for this, it was a coliseum set up far from the castle.
The spectators were set up in a ring around us, almost like this was a sport to them.
Blocks A and B even had their own dedicated fighting areas.

“Block B, first match will start now. If your opponent surrenders that will signal the end of the match. Killing is instant disqualification.”

“Ryua-chan! Good lu~ck!”

“Ryua-chan! Fight!!”

I could even hear Cynthia’s voice. I wonder what she did with her store?

“Seigel-san please sign this!”

“Please shake my hands! Please!”

“Now now, I don’t want to ignore anyone or hurt any feelings but I only have two hands. One for handshakes and one for signing things.”

A group of female spectators were making a fuss around Seigel’s seat.
I want him to leave, that gaggle of girls is distracting.
Why isn’t he participating though?

“Are you sure you have the time to be looking away?”

Benkei’s hands were already holding weapons, in one hand a sword and the other a spear.
As he got into his stance I wondered if he would use all the weapons on his back?
Though a person can only effectively use one weapon in each hand, so aren’t the rest just dead weight?

“I have but one thing to teach you: The strength of an adventurer. This match serves as a perfect teaching tool. I’ll even go easy on you because I want to avoid killing you.”

“Now then, Battle start!”

“It’s sad that it had to end this way, but think of it as a type of experience.”

As soon as the signal went off he approached me with his spear, keeping me at a distance.
He kept trying to thrust it at me, but his moves were so sloppy it’s barely grazing me.
As I lazily avoided his attacks, Benkei became agitated.

“Why do you keep running away? I was considering how you would approach me but too bad!”

As if showing off, he flicked the sword on his right hand.
It seems if I get close to him he’ll use that sword on me.

“Furthermore!”

As he threw his sword into the air, his now empty hand grasped a weapon on his back and threw it.
As it carved the air flying at me I noticed it was sharp and circular.

“Moonring blade! I have more! Take that!”

Suddenly 3 of those ‘moonring’ weapons were flying at me as well as Benkei with his spear.

For him to be so skilled it seems he’s put considerable effort into learning how to use all of those weapons.
Though ‘skilled’ is the only impression I have of this person.
The crowd began cheering with excitement as he moved like an acrobat and closed the distance.
Benkei caught the sword he had thrown in the air as the moonrings reached me.
‘There is no escape’ seemed to be expressed with his eyes.
Just before his weapons made contact I moved to his side at a speed he couldn’t keep up with.
His moonrings fell to the ground, cutting through empty air where I previously was and his spear thrust into nothing.
Benkei was a beat too slow to realize where I had moved to.
For his sake I waited until he noticed.

“So all of those weapons are for moves like that huh?”

“W-what!? Just when did you…?!”

He lost his balance as he turned towards me.

“Like you, I’m here to fight and win. Unfortunately I’m stronger.”

I moved behind Benkei again and lightly struck his neck.
Jolt, Benkei flinched and fell down without making a sound.
The spectators had been in an uproar till now, but all of B block went silent.

“Ryua-chan! Congratulations!”

“It was pretty easy…”

“See! Just as I anticipated! That girl is like an unripened fruit, steadily growing into something beautiful!”

That last part was unnecessary.
Roel and Cynthia were the only ones cheering amongst the tension.

“L-let’s see…B block, first match… the victor is Ryua!”

The crowd began cheering with that declaration.

“Geh! What’s with that! I bet a lot on Benkei you know!”

“A dark horse is HEEEEEEEEEERE!!”

I don’t know what that means but it seems everyone is surprised.

“That girl didn’t even draw her sword!”

“Was that a throw by Benkei? He stopped for a moment!”

“Haa!? Of course! That explains it! Return my money!”

“Well then…onto the second match!”

Am I supposed to go back to the waiting room?
I wanted to watch the other matches from here…if I stood in the corner would that have been fine?

“Yo, just as I thought. You’re a participant.”

“Ah, Gantetsu-san?!”

Gantestu appeared in the spectator seats.
‘Heigh ho’ he said as he sat next to Roel.

“So you travelled out here huh? If you had called me I would have arranged a cheap inn for you.”

“Eh, seriously?”

This should have been the first time Cynthia met him yet she was already getting familiar with Gantetsu.
Maybe they already knew each other?

“Oh? You’re the girl from the Kwimill item shop…and why are you surprised? An A rank like

myself can easily do something like that.”

“But we didn’t even know where you lived…”

“Oh, you’re right! Gahahahaha!”

“Are you not going to participate, Gantetsu-san?”

“I’m not a young’un anymore, and there are some decent Champion candidates here.”

I hadn’t been watching but the fight in B block with Metal-whatever already concluded…he was on the ground, defeated.

“B block, second match finish! The victor is Baste!”

“Fufu for someone with muscle for brains, my weakening magic is super effective. I can easily shut you down. You see, fighting is all about brains.”

The person speaking wore circular eyeglasses and magician robes. He was waving in an exaggerated fashion towards the audience, clearly showing off.

“The <Sealer> Baste. He doesn’t rely on offensive magic but rather suppression type spells. His strength is around that of an average A ranker. He’s also your next opponent, Ryua.”

“Hmm, Metal Rod-san wasn’t able to win and was completely crushed. Just as I expected…”

“Weakening magic huh? Ryua-chan is going to be fighting against that?”

“If his opponent was an average combatant he can completely seal their movements. He’s a specialist.”

The person from the ring seems to have more than one side to him. He was walking toward me with a really confident expression.

“You’re Ryua-kun right? I saw the match earlier, but you won’t beat me by relying on brute force. I suggest you pack up now and drop out.”

After that brief speech Baste walked off somewhere.
So he’s my next opponent.
Since Metal-whatever was kind enough to teach me things, I feel like I owe him one. I’ll beat this guy up for him.
Oh, it seems the next match is starting…

///

“Ah, just a moment…”

“What Roel? Toilet?”

“I’ll be back shortly…”

Roel left her seat and quickly walked to somewhere.

“Well she did consume 10 drinks after all.”

“It seems that no matter how much she drinks or eats she doesn’t get fat. Though I’d prefer someone cuter that can restrain themselves…”

///

“Let’s see, I’m sure it was around here…kya!”

Two people crashed into each other at the corner of a hallway.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry!”

“……..No, it’s fine.”

Roel felt guilty about the collision and lowered her head several times, much more than what was needed. After she returned to her hunt for her objective, the person she collided with silently saw Roel off. He wore a deep black robe which covered his whole body. The snake that was engraved onto his body could be seen.

“Ah how nice, that girl…”

He licked his lips and slowly chased after Roel.

Chapter 34 – Avangard Tougi Taikai Part 2

“The match already started?!”

Roel had been flustered while she was lost, but managed to find her way back.
Since there was more than one entrance to the spectator seats, Roel had circled the vast venue many times looking for the proper path.

“It’s very soon. You were in a real hurry, huh?”

“It **is** Ryua-chan’s match…”

“Oh, it’s starting.”

Just as Seigel said, the first match of the second round for B block was starting.

///

“Baste-sa~n! Look at this wa~~~~y!”

“I bet on you~!”

Most of the spectators were cheering on my opponent, Baste.
Baste just wiped his circular glasses.

"Well then, start!"

I moved first and aimed for Baste's stomach.
Before he uses his unpleasant magic, I'll defeat him.
He groaned but didn't fall over.

"Gu…*cough*…y-you went easy on me…"

Even though I used the same amount of strength on him as I did on Benkei, Baste was barely able to stand.
He doesn't seem to be able to exert any more strength after that hit.

"<Might Down>…I cast that on you just before…I thought that someone like you, a musclehead, would swiftly attack first…It looks like I managed to make it in time…"

Baste was able to explain it while holding his stomach.
That's why he could still stand.
Nevertheless, if I put more force into it…I already put a decent amount in, but not enough to kill him.

"I-I'll show you! This is the winning pattern! <God Force>! <God Force>! <God Force>!"

It was apparent that his body was rapidly getting harder.
If I just let him keep casting that, I wonder how hard he could become?

"Now for the finishing touch! <Seal>! <Blind!> With that, your skills and eyesight are sealed!"

…Is he trying to taunt me while holding his stomach like that?
He was barely able to endure the hit…
Let's just end this.

"And now <Veno Fi….Ugeeea!"

I hit him with a slightly stronger punch and this time Baste lost composure, collapsing while holding his gut.
Twitch twitch he was convulsing on the ground. I think I overdid it…

"…Ha! T-the victor is Ryua!"

The soldier regained his senses, grasped my arm, and raised it to the sky.

"I-isn't that impossible!? That girl, twice now with one hit…"

"Is she an adventurer? It's impossible for a famous enthusiast like myself to not know her!."

I think they believe me now. Their reactions are different than before, excited cheers could be heard.

“I didn’t expect her to be that strong…that isn’t on the level of just defeating a <Poison Salamander>…”

“I think Ryua-chan’s going easy so her opponent won’t die.”

“If she was serious then his guts would have scattered everywhere as his upper and lower halves got separated.”

“That’s on the level of a monster…”

She’s saying stuff like that but does it matter? I won.
‘Returning now will be troublesome so we should wait a bit,’ was what I thought, but for some reason there were many participants on standby. Even I would get embarrassed by this many people observing me.

///

F block had already completed their representative match.
His opponent was an insulting woman. Argil harbored a lot of anger in his heart during the fight.
The woman had no damage on her armor and was standing tall.

“This is the first time that I, <God of Death> Argil have been insulted so…if you are that confident in yourself why don’t we make a bet? If I win, you retire as an S rank, <Master Knight> Tifelia?”

“Eh? But I don’t want to.”

Tifelia’s hair fluttered as she looked at the face of her stumped opponent.
She was thinking ‘I’d rather be preparing tonight’s dinner’.
“Would it be better to eat out…? *sigh*”

“What did you say?”

“But if I do that too often my skin will…”

“You…!”

As the <God of Death> yelled at her, he charged with intent to kill.
He wasn’t too concerned about killing since he’s killed his own party members before.
It was unpleasant for the first while, eventually it became his badge of honor.
For him to be laughed at and insulted by the <Master Knight>, Argil was unable to keep his emotions in check.

“Now, F block final match. Are both of you ready?”

“Quickly start it…!”

“Y-yes!”

Now that the referee soldier had performed his duties, he retreated.
The soldier could feel the fear in his body, as the match started he was already off of the platform as if running away.

“You are standing before me with nothing but your prided armor. Not even a weapon! <God of Death> Argil! At A rank 7, you are close to being an S rank. Don’t think I will stand still forever!”

Argil chanted a wind magic so quickly you could barely hear the chant.
Suddenly a squall descended upon the arena and Argil released many rotating sickles from inside the tornado.
The tornado grew in size until the platform was swallowed up.
After a moment, the wind’s course began to change and the path of the sickles changed.
A storm of sickles flying around…if you were inside the squall you would be mercilessly attacked from all sides. This move has killed many monsters and party members.

“Uwaa…I-I can’t get near…”

The referee was unable to approach the platform to do his job. He looked rather angry as he looked at what was happening.

“Even in this tempest you won’t flinch…”

The sickles were aiming at Tifelia. A normal human would be sliced in the blink of an eye, but Tifelia just took the hits. She came out unscathed, looking annoyed as she stood her ground.

“*Sigh*…”

As she sighed, she smashed one of the sickles flying at her.
She was completely unphased by the wind, and she hadn’t moved a step from the spot she had started in.

“That’s right, Ritta-chan would definitely cook me some food…rather I will make her cook me food.”

Argil had been riding the wind and approached her flank.
The sickle blade’s intent was to cut her neck.
Of course, the rules of this tournament would deem that a disqualification.
However, the <God of Death> hadn’t cared about the tournament from the start.
Even the <Master Fighter> didn’t have that kind of resolve.
But that lack of hesitation was the trigger.

The sickle made contact with Tifelia’s neck.

However, even this sickle which could cut steel left no mark on her skin. Argil was flabbergasted.

"T-that's ridiculous! Just what did you do!?"

"Eh? So you were still here…"

With that one phrase the wind stopped.
Argil thought that Tifelia was using some kind of skill.
However, the moment his move was negated, his will to fight disappeared along with his wind.
Argil surrendered.

"Match end!"

Being absent minded, Argil left Tifelia on the platform.

—-'so you were still here'.

Due to his experience with combat, he could understand the meaning behind that line.
It's not that he wouldn't become her opponent, it's that there was no opponent before her.
She hadn't been fighting from the start.

"So this is S rank…"

The audience had been looking forward to the fight between Tifelia and Argil. No one could understand why it suddenly stopped.

"What? Is that the end? Seriously? There weren't any panty shots from Tifelia-chan!"

"I saw Argil's attack, didn't he stop it himself? Oi! If you don't feel like it why are you here~?"

Unless one had been in Argil's shoes during that moment, no third party could understand the fear he felt.

///

The wind stopped coming from that direction.
I wonder who had been fighting there?
I wasn't curious about the wind but rather the participants.
I was able to feel heavy pressure for a moment even from this distance.
That person seemed to pass the preliminaries.

"Victor, Griiman!"

"The fight is decided by the efficiency of your equipment! Remember that!"

Griiman declared while facing the audience.

He was definitely wearing expensive silver armor.
His helmet was so polished it was like a mirror, his sword had a dragon wing decoration on it, and hung around his neck were a multitude of jewel-like accessories.
Being so over the top…it looks really ugly.
I wonder if he cares about appearances?

"You're right about that Griiman~! It's all about fighting with lots of good equipment!"

"Ah-hah! You got it! This way is better than slowly polishing your superficial skills. Investing a lot of money into your gear is better than just being all talk!"

That's wrong…I don't know what he's spouting, but it's wrong.
Armor doesn't make that much of a difference. I don't wear any myself.
I tried wearing some that I picked up at the <Caves of Hell>, but it was a pain to wear and stuffy so I threw it away.

"Griiman recently became A ranked, he's pretty energetic."

"Keh…I feel like the young guys these days are taking shortcuts. He only managed to get to that rank because of all that equipment."

"I'm not denying or approving that. But proof of his strength is easy to measure since he can display it at any time."

"*Gulp* fu~n…*Gulp*"

"Roel-chin, you've had way too much to drink…won't you end up going to the toilet again?"

They were pretty lively in their seats.

"We'll have a 15 minute break now, but afterwards the final preliminary match will begin!"

A break huh? Seeing Roel drink so much, I'm feeling rather thirsty.
Should I buy a drink if the salesperson is still wandering through the spectator seats?
I jumped towards the spectator seats, and as I landed the surrounding people looked at me with surprised expressions. I bought a Momoru Soda with my limited pocket change.

"Ryua, that was rather rude. I know it's bothersome but follow the path like everyone else to get up here."

"Oka~y."

I didn't expect Seigel to berate me about that.
But with all those girls following him, I guess he has to keep up appearances.

"Ryua, give that greenhorn a punch right from the get-go!"

"If she did that wouldn't he die…? *Gulp*"

I wonder why Gantestu was so angry?
Moreover, Roel, you're drinking way too much.

"So you're Ryua-san……"

My arm was being rubbed by Tifelia. I didn't even notice she got this close to me.

"Yo, Tifelia. You're participating this time, huh? How did you stop that wind?"

"Fu~un, *rub* *rub*…"

"Ignoring me huh? I get it."

She was completely ignoring Seigel and kept rubbing my arm and body. It was more like tickling at this point, so I brushed her hand away.

"Ah, I'm sorry…"

"I-it's fine…"

"D-don't do anything strange to Ryua-chan!"

"You…are an adventurer?"

"Yeah."

"Really…"

As she said that, she jumped down in a similar fashion to how I got up here.
Seigel needs to warn her as well.

"As usual, that woman is really hard to keep still. Though that's good in its own way."

Nothing!?
Whatever, the situation got weird because of her. I drank my soda and jumped down like Tifelia had.

"Ah!"

My match will start soon; Griiman is my opponent, it seems.
The same guy that was currently showing off his gear while smack-talking his opponent.

"A good adventurer uses good equipment while a shabby man will wear shabby things!"

"Even though I don't recklessly choose my gear…how…"

As the onlookers became envious, Griiman seemed really satisfied.
I wonder how expensive my Mithril sword is?

"Oh, my match will start soon! So the opponent of the great me is…that girl!"

“Yeah, it’ll be me. Nice to meet you.”

“I’ve seen your matches up till now, you show promise. However, I’ll say it now: You won’t win against me.”

Griiman pointed as if he was taunting me.
Sure, bring it on.

Chapter 35 – Avangard Tougi Taikai Part 3

The preliminary final for our block had placed me against Griiman.
I had to win against Benkei, Baste, and many others, but this guy has a weird atmosphere.
Griiman kept looking at my sword; he was clearly fascinated by it. I can’t compare him to how he seemed before.

“B Block preliminary final match, begin!”

“Wait!”

By blocking the signal, it became a false start.
Really? What do you want?
Just when I thought I would have to wait for a while to get started, Griiman raised his palm to me as if denying my worries.

“I am a merciful man, nothing more. If you were defeated without knowing what my equipment did, you wouldn’t accept that as a loss would you?”

“Why are you already deciding that I’ve lost on your own?”

“Don’t get conceited because you defeated Benkei and Baste. Those guys lost because they didn’t have proper gear. Really, it’s amazing that they talk about being an A-rank in the first place.”

Griiman approached me with his extravagant sword unsheathed.

“First off is this–Ice Dragon Sword. A monster that lives far to the north at <Breeze Mountain>, the <Freezing Winter Dragon>, had its fang turned into this weapon. The sharpness of this blade is top class and it also has an ice magic effect to boot.”

As he put down his sword, I thought he was finished explaining, but then he poked his armor with his thumb. Is he going to explain all of his equipment to me? Honestly, I’m interested.

“This armor is hand-made by a skilled armor craftsman, Shiromi Armor. It cuts the damage you take from magic, regardless of its type. Lastly is this necklace; it increases your health and contains a passive ability to protect you if you get into a dangerous situation.”

I, who was fine with my Mithril Sword, realized the gap between us just from that explanation. His armor seems like it would be too hot to wear, but his sword is cool.

It looks heavier than my sword, but its strength is probably much greater than mine.

“Now then, should we get this match started?”

“Sure. Is it fine for me to attack now?”

“I won’t let you get the first move in!”

Griiman swung his <Ice Dragon Sword> in a large arc, and many ice pillars began to stretch out and attack me. I wonder how hard his armor is?
Ignoring the ice spears, I just kicked them away and tried hitting his chest with a little more power than the time I hit Baste.
A loud metallic sound rung out and at the same time a hole appeared in his armor.
My punch didn’t stop at his armor; it actually had gone through to hit his abdomen.

“Guh! *Hack**Cough*”

Blood was dripping from Griiman’s mouth as he flew off of the platform.
You could hear both him and his armor hitting the ground.
The referee rushed over to confirm things, and Griiman was eventually carried out on a stretcher.

“Winner, Ryua! The representative of B Block has been decided!”

“Just what was that? Is she a monster!?”

“No way, it must be a trick. If you paid Griiman a lot of money, he would throw the fight.”

It’s not a trick.

“Hmm, it looks like all the representatives have been chosen. The tournament lineup will be announced shortly so we’ll have to wait until then.”

The other soldiers were speaking amongst themselves, but the referee soldier that had been in charge of my match suddenly walked off somewhere.
I could see the other representatives on a far away platform, but there was nobody from Tifelia-san’s block.

“Oi, go up that way~!”

Seigel called out to me while waving his hand.
The flocking girls made it hard to see him; it would be better if they went away.
I thought about jumping to get to him quickly, but instead I leisurely walked.

///

“Ryua-chin, you really did it! A nameless female adventurer advancing towards the tournament finals is quite a big deal you know!”

It seems to have caused quite the commotion, and I've noticed many people, spectators and adventurers alike, looking at me recently.

"There are other C-ranked participants, but almost all of them have been defeated. I wonder how long it's been since a C-rank has been a block representative?"

"Me, me, it's me ~ssho~"

With his strange hip-bending stance, Xinbu called out to us.
It's the guy that tried to kill Grundom…I can't believe he's an adventurer.

"Yo Xinbu, looks like you're not participating this year. What are you going to do?"

"Relax guys, I'm different from you. I've been rather busy ~ssho~, at any rate…oops~"

I wonder what he was going to say?
Well, it's fine. I'd rather not talk to him anyways.

"If you're busy, then why waste time bothering us?"

"An adventurer past his prime shouldn't be so snippy with me. I'm interested in that one."

He shot that snarky remark at Gantetsu and pointed towards me with his palm facing the sky.

"You should quickly raise your rank to A ~ssho~. Although, this tournament will most likely only bump you up to B."

"Oh? But if I do that, then Roel…"

"Huh?"

Did she only notice Xinbu now…? I see many scattered cups around her, just how much has she drunk?

"I-I'm shocked ~ssho~…"

He's surprised by this…?
Well I guess I'm used to Roel's behaviour, but seeing it for the first time would be shocking.

"That's right, that's right. Since you're in a party with this bottomless drinker, she should also be able to achieve B-rank, regardless of how useless she is."

"Ha?"

Did this guy come here specifically to make fools of us?
I clenched my fist in anger towards Xinbu, but Roel just gently raised her hand.

"It's fine, Ryua-chan. Don't mind me…"

“Well at least have fun in the festival ~ssho~, just leave everything to us.”

What did he mean by that? Before I could ask he had already run away.
I really hate him.

“Your hate isn’t misplaced. The thing is, he’s the 4th place A-rank and hasn’t budged in a long time. His strength and achievements don’t lie. Enough to make you jealous right?”

“It actually makes you want to try and fight against him someday, no?”

Seigel drank the ‘juice’ he received from a girl while talking.
I don’t know if he’s serious or not considering he’s drinking.

“Thank you very much for your patience! We just finished deciding the line-up for the tournament! Please look over here!”

Round 1
1st Match
<Meteor> Nikka [A-Rank]
vs
<Crusher> Hekaton [A-Rank]

2nd Match
Ryua [C-Rank]
vs
<Heroine of the 100 Empires> Amane [A-Rank]

3rd Match
<Sky Crown> Rupee [A-Rank]
vs
Kweed [B-Rank]

4th Match
<Master Knight> Tifelia [S-Rank]
vs
Inoro [No Rank]

There was a large iron board with words displayed on it. My name as well as the names of the other participants were on it.
My opponent is…is it a woman?
I wonder what kind of person she is?

“Hou, it seems there’s a B-ranked guy that advanced as well. Looks like a rising star besides Ryua is here, lucky guy~”

He really was lucky. Besides us, there were only A-ranked fighters. Hekaton was the guy with the huge hammer, right? He had a rather awful atmosphere about him and looked at people with really cold eyes…

“Even so, isn’t the board dominated by A-ranked combatants? Ryua-chin being a C-rank really sticks out here.”

“They are A-ranked for a reason. They have had a massive amount of combat experience when compared to others. Even I, who’s ranked 16th, went through a lot of hardships…”

“Tell us! I feel like I’ve heard you talk about this about 6 times now, but I want to hear it again~!”

The gaggle of girls surrounding Seigel attentively hung on his every word. I’m interested in hearing about it, but I’m not about to fight through his fans to listen.

“With this, the first day of the Tougi Taikai ends! The finals will start tomorrow, so rest well everyone!”

With that announcement from the soldiers, the amount of people inside the coliseum gradually dwindled. I hadn’t noticed that it was already evening.

“Well then, Ryua, starting tomorrow the actual matches will start. Because it’s the finals, the amount of spectators will be much greater than what turned up today. The King of Avangard will also be here.”

“The King will be?”

“That’s right. This is your big chance. If you manage to catch his Majesty’s attention, then there’s a chance you’ll gain his favor.”

“To be favored by the King due to fighting…”

The King of Avangard…I know that the King holds the most powerful position in a Kingdom. But to be liked by him merely due to fighting is somehow… wrong.

“It seems that there are only a few people still here. Aa~…the air is good tonight! It would go great with some ale!”

“I’ll join you, Gantetsu-san!”

“Me too!”

I wonder if Roel will also join them… Although, it seems she has a different goal in mind.

“Well then, girl, good luck tomorrow!”

Will Cynthia also show up tomorrow? What happened to selling lots of things?

///

As we travelled back, I was quite restless, but I still walked slowly.
Nighttime seems to be quite lively around here.

A half-naked drunkard was on the sidewalk, sleeping people were scattered here and there, and some people were even dancing.
Roel was enticed by the smells coming from a food cart.

“Ryua-chan, aren’t you hungry from all that fighting? Don’t worry about the cost, just eat whatever you want.”

“Now that you mention it, I’m starting to get hungry…”

We went to the food cart that was making steaks out of <Dark Buffalo> from the Kwau region. It’s quite delicious, even more than the <Pecking Bird>…but as I expected, Roel ordered 10 servings as soon as we approached.

“Grilling it until it’s perfectly cooked, and pouring the excess sauce on it…so good~”

“No other way to eat it! Grilling it until it’s perfectly cooked, and pouring the excess sauce on it~ so good~”

Why did Roel say the same thing twice? I guess she was just deeply moved by how good the steaks tasted? I don’t get her sometimes.

“Ryua-chan, Congratulations! This is our celebration for you advancing in the tournament!”

“I-is that so? …thanks.”

Chewing on the bone in the meat while saying that doesn’t quite work you know…

“Since we came all this way, you need to make it to the championship! …ah, I’m not trying to put pressure on you or anything!”

“If possible…I want to win.”

“If it’s Ryua-chan, I’m sure you can! Even today you won with only using a punch.”

“Yeah, but I’m worried about Tifelia-san. If she becomes my opponent I don’t know what will happen…”

“That rubby-rubby person? So she’s Tifelia…I got a little angry.”

“Eh?”

“N-nothing!”

Roel’s face turned red and she turned away. Is she hot or something?

“Even from far away, I felt an electric shock from her. She seemed like quite a gentle person though…”

I was able to feel it even from a distant block.

——S-rank

It may just be like Seigel said, they're all monsters. I'm sure that she's an opponent I shouldn't go easy on. I thought about tomorrow while eating spareribs with Roel.

"You'll be killed you know!? I'm saying this now because it gives you a chance, please withdraw."

The surrounding eyes all gazed at the loud voice. A girl and a young man could be seen seated together. I recognized that hair, it was the female soldier that guided us before the preliminaries! Seeing her hop here and there left an impression on me, it seems.

"Even so, Ritta, I'm still an A-rank. I'll be fine, just believe in me!"

"Your opponent is the <Crusher>, you know that right? Last year he was disqualified for killing his opponent!"

"My nickname is <Meteor> for a reason. I'm a good matchup against his fighting style. I can't say I won't make a mistake, but I'm really confident in my chances for this fight."

"Why are you being so stubborn…?"

Crusher's opponent was…<Meteor> Nikka.

"I really want you to watch my match."

"Aaaugh I don't care anymore!"

Ritta ran out from the food cart while Nikka just watched her and sighed.

"Ah, you don't need to worry about that. It's not an intimate relationship; we're siblings."

'Hahahaha' he laughed while scratching his head.
Even as he paid for the food, the atmosphere he left stayed awkward.

"Ritta-chan is worried about her brother's match…but I wonder what Nikka meant when he expressed his desire for her to watch him?"

I understand why she would be worried about her brother, but I feel like he wants to fight.
I'm the same as him, after coming this far I won't just stop, especially since there were only a few matches left.
I won't withdraw.

///

"That sure was delicious…"

"Roel, this is bad…our money is…"

“Spending this much should be expected when going to a festival.”

I wonder why she’s so lenient about spending our money now?
Seeing her so satisfied though…I’ll let it slide.

The town was still noisy. As expected at this late hour, you couldn’t see any children running around. Oh, there’s a girl stopping a fight between drunks.

A girl?

Ah, it’s Ritta.

“I will be stopping this fight so-bufue!”

She wasn’t even able to finish her sentence before they started fighting;, she was just brushed off to the side.
Not being discouraged by this, she came between them again.

“You won’t be able to stop it with just that…”

“Yeah, I can’t watch this any more…”

I quickly moved towards Ritta to help her out. I wonder if she hasn’t noticed me yet? She was looking between the men restlessly and finally saw me approaching her.

“Eh, ah, umm…sorry…”

“I’ll stop them, so don’t worry.”

I approach the men as I say that. The stink of alcohol is making me really dizzy; how do people drink this stuff? Why would they drink enough to be this belligerent? I’m at a loss.

“Didn’t you just bump into me? Aren’t you gonna apologize!? HUH!? Don’t you young’uns know any manners?”

“Old man, you should just retire. You’re a hindrance.”

They just bumped into each other…really? Something so trivial? Ah well, it can’t be helped. I can’t let this go on any longer.

“Hey, grumpy old men, you’re being a hindrance you know.”

“So? Just go away…oh.”

They realized it wasn’t Ritta trying to stop them anymore and seemed a little surprised. Even so, they just brushed me aside like they had done to Ritta. Right then, I began.
I grasped one of each man’s hands.

“Owowowowow! Ouch! Please stop it’s going to breeeeak!”

“Are you for real? It can’t hurt that-!!! Agh!”

“Both of you are disturbing the other people here, so just stop fighting and leave.”

“Yes yes,” they both answered, and I released them.
They both disappeared inside the crowd, not understanding what just happened.
Apparently, they can still be calm while drunk.

“Um, sorry…thank you.”

“You should be more careful, that was a dangerous thing to do.”

“But I should at least be able to stop something at that level, being a soldier from the castle and all…I get laughed at regularly for not being able to do my job…”

It seems she’s desperate because of that. Did I mess up? She even had tears falling from her eyes…

“Oi, Ritta!”

I heard that carefree voice from earlier; it was Nikka. Was he worried about Ritta? It seemed like he had been looking for her, and he was breathing rather heavily as if he had been running.

“Are you all right? Did those guys do anything strange to you? …nnn?”

‘Those guys do anything strange’ caught my attention.
Nikka glanced at Roel and I, and as he saw me his expression suddenly lit up.

“Ah! You’re Ryua-kun right? You’re the C-rank <Surprising Girl>!”

“Su-surprising!?”

“You didn’t know? You’ve been the topic of some very heated conversations recently! Crushing the A-ranked fighters without any difficulty made people talk about scouting you for a party and even for a guild!”

“Now that you mention it, I’ve been noticing people stealing glances at me recently.”

“They’re probably waiting for the finals with bated breath. It seems you and I will be fighting in the 2nd round, please be gentle with me…hahahaha!”

“That’s another reason why I kept saying that Onii-chan won’t be able to win!”

It looks like their argument from the food cart is continuing, Ritta exploded on Nikka again.
Why is Nikka being so stubborn and ignoring his sister’s wishes about competing in the Tougi Taikai?
I thought we were competing for the same reasons, but clearly his motivation in this tournament was different from mine.

Chapter 36 – Avangard Tougi Taikai Part 4

The 2nd day of the Tougi Taikai, the finals of the tournament.
The crowd is incomparable to the amount of people that showed up for the preliminaries.
From the castle to its gate, all the way up to the coliseum, no matter where you go it's so packed with people you can't move freely.
I was eventually able to make it to the participant waiting room after being pushed and mobbed by the crowd.
I wonder if Roel made it to the spectator seats safely?
The only people left in this room were the participants for the finals.
Nikka and Hekaton were both here, but for some reason Tifelia was absent?
Perhaps she just slept in…
As I entered the room, I was approached by a woman wearing very revealing armor.

"You're Ryua, right?"

"Y-yeah, why?"

"To be a finalist in the tournament at such a young age, not bad. I am Amane, an A-rank adventurer and the Guild Master of <Johyo-dan>."

It seems there's an adventurer-run guild that's comprised of individual adventurers and entire parties of adventurers. They're unique in that aspect. It works more or less like the guild Roel and I go to, except the war spoils for this guild are managed by the entire group and are used as funds for journeys and such. Seigel explained it to me while he was killing time in the <Kizel Canyon>. It was a long and boring talk but I listened to some of it.

"I really like strong women. If you're okay with it, why not join <Johyo-dan>? No matter the time, you'll be welcomed with open arms."

"T-thanks for the offer but…"

"It's fine. There's no rush."

Knowing that the A-ranks aren't filled with people like Hekaton and are all disagreeable gives me some peace of mind. There are some nice ones as well.

"Keh, it's a Guild that just throws away men…"

"Haa!? Did you say something?"

A man with long bangs covering one eye was standing in the room. He had a mysterious air about him and was stroking his sword's scabbard. He has an air of self-importance.

"I know about it. You only let women who've been traumatized during a journey or from some other source in the past join your Guild. It's a gathering of losers."

"Do you want to start something before the tournament?"

Amane had a gentle face up until that moment, but now she looks like a different person, filled with hatred. Her blood vessels popped out and her body swelled, it makes you wonder if Amane is actually a woman? Though what did that guy mean by trauma? Is he talking about being betrayed by your party?

"You're Kweed, right? Looking down on me just because I'm a woman…I'm still an A-rank you know? You'll experience a lot of pain if you keep this up."

"Now that I think about it, I did something similar in the past. A woman with no knowledge about the world approached me to form a party, and in the end I unintentionally did her. I wonder how things turned out for her afterwards….gehehehehehehahahahaha!"

Amane looked like she was ready to pounce on Kweed due to that provocation, but Nikka came between the two of them to interrupt.

"If you cause trouble in the waiting room you'll be disqualified, you know that right? Settle your argument in the ring, ok?"

Nikka winked as Amane and Kweed calmed down.
Amane was still very agitated and was glaring at Kweed.
As if making a fool of her, Kweed laughed and returned to his seat, stroking his scabbard.
Amane slowly sat down with a scary expression on her face.
Kweed said they were losers, but if you get up after being defeated, you're not a loser.
Even I have lost many times. If you make fun of someone just because they've lost once, I'll be the one to beat you down.

"Uffufufufu, just a bit more…just wait a little longer and you can suck some blood ok?"

Kweed kept stroking his scabbard while murmuring. It's really creepy so I stopped looking at him.

"Yaa, yaa, I'm sorry for being so late! I even set my alarm for an hour early…"

A person wearing what looked like a crown and a gorgeous robe entered the room. Just before entering, that person had rolled up their hair into an odd hairstyle. I really wanted to put something like a pencil in it.

"So, it's <Sky Crown>…I heard you were a specialist in Star magic, perhaps having a one-on-one duel with you would be a good idea."

Hekaton suddenly declared that in a sarcastic tone.
I was trying to think about how <Sky Crown> was going to respond, but all that came out was laughter as Hekaton's sarcasm was ignored.

"You may be right about that! However, a person truly shines after putting in great effort! Just like the stars!"

I only saw the ceiling above us, not any stars. <Sky Crown> was pointing a finger to the sky,

seemingly satisfied.

"Scum."

Hekaton swung his body as he stood up and faced the match grounds. At that moment, some soldiers came.

"The Opening Ceremony will be starting now! Each of you, please follow me!"

Opening Ceremony? I wonder what that is? Are we not fighting?
Tifelia has yet to appear, but we still headed off towards the grounds to start the ceremony.

///

The match fields from the preliminary round weren't here anymore, instead there was a large platform in the middle of the coliseum. It was circular and surrounded by spectators. I wonder where Roel is?
During the preliminaries I was able to see her seat near F block, but this time there are way too many people to pick her out of a crowd.
It was really hot with the sun beating down on us and the numerous people in the coliseum.

"With this, we will now start the Opening Ceremony! First, the participants!"

We had been on standby at the entrance, and we filed into the coliseum one by one.
The fanfare was totally different from the preliminaries, the spectators raised quite the din.

"Well then, I will be the official for this tournament! You may call me Kathia! Now onto the participants! The representative from A block; crushing his opponents dreams and hopes with his mighty hammer: <Crusher> Hekaton!"

Hekaton raised one hand, as if responding to the shouts from the spectators.

"Why is a murderer participating again! This tournament is ridiculous!"

"DIE!"

There were some curses mixed into the cheers and shouts from the audience. I recall Ritta talking about how Hekaton killed someone in last year's tournament and got disqualified… was it on purpose?

"E~h? Well, moving onto B block! Surprisingly a C-rank, a junior crushing her seniors! Even veteran A-rank adventurers are downed with just her fist! The One-Punch Girl, <Surprising Girl> Ryua!"

I feel really uneasy for some reason…
Some people were in high spirits from that introduction. But, One-Punch Girl? I didn't use my sword, but still…

"AHAHAHAHAHA! O-One-Punch Girl she says!"

“D-don’t laugh! I-isn’t it cool!?”

I heard Cynthia laughing and Roel following up on her from somewhere.
I hung my head in shame during my introduction, I can’t show my embarassed face to all these people.

“From C block, defeating veterans as fast at the stars twinkle! A-rank <Meteor> Nikka!”

“I’ve been expecting this~!”

There was a fair amount of cheering, but Nikka seemed depressed while being introduced. I didn’t think he was so weak-minded.

“Next is a heroine that needs no introduction! Reigning at the top of 100 empires! From D block, inflicting fear deep inside of all men she encounters! A-rank <Heroine of 100 Empires> AMANEEEEEE!”

“Amane-san~! Don’t lose to a man!”

“You amateurs don’t understand Amane-chan’s cuteness!”

“Being scorned by Amane-chan, glared at by her sharp eyes, and best of all when she spits at us and yelling *scum!* while we breathe heavily!”

She’s pretty popular with women and men, but did I hear some weird comments mixed into those cheers?
Regardless, Amane waved her hand to everyone in the audience. She has a big heart, it seems.

“We have one more dark horse from E block! The nihilistic B-rank, Kweed!”

“I’m expecting something from you! I just became your fan!”

“That’s somewhat disgusting~”

You can hear some jeering yet reasonable responses. I wonder if he’s still as confident as he was earlier?

“From far away in F block, a star has come around, floating with a royal appearance and a glittering crown! One of the few Star magic users, <Sky Crown> Rupeeee!”

“There sure a lot of glittering stars today! There and over here as well!”

“KYA~! Please face here, our prince~!”

“Tsk, die!”

Rupee seems to be quite popular with the ladies. Prince you say?
He raised his hands while spinning slowly, responding to his supporters.

When I thought he was done, a glittering light came out from his hand and flew towards the spectator seats.

"For the happiness I feel today, this is a present. Tomorrow's happiness will be grasping your hands as if I was holding the stars themselves."

"Ah~ I can't take this anymore~"

It looks like people started to faint from being too happy?
This is bad. I can't figure out what he said…I need to study more, it seems.

"And now, from G block is!…eh, what?"

Right, Tifelia still isn't here. The soldiers that were looking forward to seeing her seemed perplexed.

"I apologize, I slept in late…*sigh*"

Tifelia trotted into the coliseum in a daze, bread hanging from her mouth.
It seems…this is how Tifelia does things.

"E-eh! From G block, Avangard Kingdom's prided and strongest knight! You all know her title, <Master Knight>! The sole reason our finances are unbalanced, Tifelia-chan!"

"She's here!!! Please give me that bread~!"

"Even though I'm a woman, I'd be okay with Tifelia holding me!"

The cheers seem quite…different than what came out earlier. The air and ground vibrated from the sheer noise the crowd emitted. For the entire venue to cheer for one girl like this…

"Keh, the trash is too noisy."

Hekaton seems to hate seeing this, he's spitting out some curses.
It seems he's on edge waiting for the fight to start. That's the vibe I get from him, anyways.

"Lastly, from H block! ….eh? Mysterious Man, Inoro!"

The venue suddenly fell silent. I hadn't even noticed him in the waiting room. Inoro's entire face was covered by a black cloth that coiled around his face, his body was covered by a black robe, everything he had on was black. It was really bizarre.
Nobody cheered for him.

"Was there someone like that in the preliminaries?"

"Yeah, but he's pretty ordinary. He only used normal magic and showed no special traits…"

"Now that the introductions are finished, our Majesty has some words for us! Please be silent!"

Will the King finally show himself? There were two soldiers standing in a spot higher than the spectator seats, as well as an old man with a strict face I had never seen before.
An extravagant chair was in the middle of that section, but nobody was seated on it.
After a brief moment, an old man in one of the seats up there moved forward.
He had light brown hair tidily lying on his back.
A crown sat upon his head, just like with Rupee. He also had a thick robe on.
The old man slowly sat down in the fancy chair.
The venue was dead silent. Was there anything interesting to even talk about at a time like this?

"It's been about 400 years since Avangard was founded. Every year we've held an exhibition like today's tournament. It goes without saying that the goal of this tournament is to cultivate the future for any possible warriors, and to be chosen to bear this country's hope. Unlike other countries, Avangard does not have many specialties. We mostly rely on imports for products. What we excel at is <Strength>. Right now, in this era of adventurers, there can be no mistake in the results of cultivating strong warriors. We encourage everyone here to constantly improve and cultivate their abilities. To the eight of you before me, I am proud of you. Adventurers like yourselves are the true pride of Avangard, and I expect great things from you. Your struggle to get here was surely difficult…"

I feel sleepy…I did wake up pretty early after all. How long will he drone on for? I want to start already.

———The King's speech ended up putting me to sleep.

///

"I wonder what kind of place 'outside' is?"

I've always thought about what exists outside the village. I talked to Kurinka about it pretty frequently. She would just obediently listen to me. I really love her…

"If Ryua-chan is going to become an adventurer, I wonder what I will become?"

"What are you talking about?"

"Well, some adventurer classes use swords and others magic."

"Hee~ I wonder which I'll choose."

"Ryua-chan looks like she would be bad with magic."

Kurinka was giggling while she said that.
Would it be better to use a sword to fight?

——burning houses.
Father and mother crouching, holding their heads.
It looked like it really hurt.

Both of them were shouting as I ran.
They thrust me away when I reached them.
“Run away! Run away!”, they kept repeating that to me.
Why?

I escaped outside only to see monsters destroying the village.
Kurinka. Where is Kurinka?
Even though we promised to play outside.
I can’t find her anywhere…

I saw something in the distance.
That guy was standing amongst the burning flames.
That black demon.
That one-winged black demon.

He slowly walked towards me.
That guy, that’s right…that guy—

“Get away from it!”

Someone shouted.

I ran away.

I turned back to see the Demon pierce that person.

I ran into the deep forest without stopping.

Suddenly a monster attacked.

Just before its claws tore me up—

///

“…was there. That is the history of our country.”

“guu…suu…”

I was shaken by someone and woke up.
It seems I ended up falling asleep. Amane was sitting next to me and awkwardly pointed towards the King. He was looking at me.

“I-I’m really sorry.”

I bowed my head earnestly, though that didn’t need to be said.
The King let out a little sigh and continued talking.

“…that’s all! Ladies and gentlemen, I pray you good luck! Now, I declare that the 402th Avangard Tougi Taikai has officially begun!”

The audience got fired up as the King finished. It looks like things are finally starting.

I noticed the King was still looking at me, saying nothing. I just let out and awkward laugh to avoid trouble.

"Fu~…"

The King sighed again.
This type of person…I'm bad at dealing with them.
"Today, let's show the King my fights," I decided.

Chapter 37 – Avangard Tougi Taikai Part 5

"Well then, it has finally begun. The Avangard Tougi Taikai Finals! This is Kathia, reporting live, and I'll be in charge of critique while explanations will be done by Shitakka-san!"

"I'm Shitakka, please take care of me."

"I think the champion this time around will be Tifelia-chan, but who else has a chance?"

"Umu, Hekaton and Rupee are the most likely besides Tifelia. Beyond that, I couldn't say. That C-rank girl isn't used to fighting either. Look at her sword, the handle is practically spotless. That is enough proof to show it isn't used at all."

"I see! Oh, it looks like the first match is about to start!"

The voices of the reporters resounded within the coliseum. According to Amane-san, it seems they use a machine to make their voices loud. They said something rather rude about me though.
I wonder if Shitakka is famous?

"Don't take the words of that person seriously."

Amane comforted me since I was sulking.
Even though she has a tough appearance, she's quite kind.
It is fine to confide in her so much though? She is my first opponent, after all…
Hekaton and Nikka had already ascended to the match platform.

"Round 1, 1st Match! Hekaton vs. Nikka! It's finally getting underway. Shitakka-san, in this situation, Hekaton is superior right?"

"That's actually not the case. Nikka is a new A-rank with potential. You'll understand why he's called <Meteor> when the match begins."

Hekaton was looking at Nikka with no interest in his eyes.
Nikka was doing some stretches and relaxing.
I wonder where Ritta is watching from?
It seems she wasn't able to stop him in the end, but I wonder how she feels watching this?

“You just recently became A-rank, right? It would’ve been fine if you hadn’t shown up here you know?”

“No, this isn’t the time to be childish.”

“So carefree…”

“Well then, let the match commence!”

With that, it began.
Will Hekaton brandish his hammer to fight? If he misses, he’ll leave a large opening.
Since Nikka is using a spear, I can’t really tell who will win.

“Nuun!”

Hekaton brought down his hammer upon Nikka.
After the thundering sound of impact, the match platform had been utterly destroyed at ground zero.

“Nikka evaded with ease~! Just as I thought, Nikka is much faster!”

Hekaton once again prepared his hammer. I don’t think either is serious yet.
They were just observing each other for a while, but then Nikka did a running long jump. He came crashing down onto Hekaton.

“Meteor <Piercing Star>!”

“Nikka’s certain kill skill, <Piercing Star>! Its power can even pierce steel! However, it’s no good!”

Hekaton’s hammer intercepted the tip of the spear. He pursued Nikka into the air while defending.

“Torya!”

I thought he was going to hit Nikka, but suddenly Hekaton’s hammer was hit.
As if swimming in the air, Nikka corrected his posture and attacked again with his spear.
Hekaton wasn’t able to defend in time.

“Meteor <Heaven Star Strike>!”

With a speed surpassing his previous <Piercing Star> skill, Nikka’s spear flew into Hekaton. It crashed into the platform and caused rubble to fly everywhere due to its power. If Hekaton had taken the hit straight on, then he wouldn’t have walked away unscathed.
It was like a meteor.
I see, so this is how Nikka fights.
Hekaton wasn’t able to dodge the <Heaven Star Strike> entirely; half of his body was covered in blood as he managed to stand back up.

“A-amazing! He dances like a butterfly and stings like a bee! Fighting in such an elegant way, this is Nikka the <Meteor>!”

“See, you can’t just decide who will win the match like that. Don’t make light of Nikka’s potential.”

“It’s just like I heard earlier!”

Flowing from his <Heaven Star Strike> into another attack, Nikka assaulted from below as if trying to gouge the ground. I thought his attack was over after the ‘meteor’ hit the ground, but it seems there’s more to it. He approached Hekaton with a terrifying speed.

I’m curious, can Hekaton really not counterattack?
When he took that blow from Nikka…

He was smiling.

“Onii-chan!”

Ritta was in the front row, and she looked like she was praying as she watched.
Attack after attack, Nikka wasn’t giving any room for Hekaton to fight back.
I’ve been hearing “the match is over” from the spectators around me, but I see it differently.
Hekaton has been smiling this whole time.
That isn’t the face of defeat.

“Kukuku…as I thought, that’s all you have. Oooorah!”

Hekaton suddenly swung his hammer and hit Nikka dead on from the side.
He couldn’t dodge in time.
Blood spewed from Nikka’s mouth as he flew to the edge of the platform.

“Ugh-!”

“Ooh? I hit you it seems. Maybe it was a fluke? Kuku…”

No, that was calculated.
Nikka’s attacks come in a straight line. Once you get used to it, it would be simple to read his trajectory.
If he was faster things might be different, but there’s no creativity to his attacks.
Nikka couldn’t move due to the immense pain.
Hekaton slowly approached him and brought his hammer down onto Nikka’s arm.

“GYAAAAAAH!”

“Ooh, I managed to hit you again! Today sure is my lucky day!”

“U-uaaaa”

That attack from earlier should have decided the match. Why hasn’t it been stopped?

“That’s right while we’re here, why don’t you wish on that star of yours? Although, it doesn’t matter since I will be winning this match!”

Nikka’s other hand was smashed.
He couldn’t cry out this time, he had fainted from the pain.
Both of his arms were crushed and minced.

“That guy-!”

“Idiot, if you interrupt you’ll be disqualified!”

“But Amane-san! If this continues then Nikka will die!”

“The referee should be stopping it!”

The referee was standing behind Hekaton. Why?

“Onii-chan, please give up already! Please!”

That’s right; he has to surrender. It’s not a match anymore.

“Oi! Ref! Stop the match!”

“Really? You don’t see anything and you want the match to end?”

What does he mean by that…?
Standing in front of the referee…wait…
That guy…

“This is pretty unpleasant to look at. Is your leg the problem?”

Hekaton pressed his hammer onto Nikka’s leg. Slowly putting pressure on until it started to become crushed, just to deliver more pain.

“Onii-chan! Noooooooo! Someone! Someone!”

Ritta jumped down from the spectator seat.

“You there, if you want to see an insect flying about, there are better places than this you know. How did this thing reach A-rank anyways? I’m being kind and doing you a service like this, making sure you can’t become an A-rank again. You won’t have to die if I do this, right? Is that your sister making all that racket? How pitiful, to have such a careless brother.”

I can’t stand seeing Ritta crying any more.
I don’t care if I’m disqualified.
Just as I was about to jump out at Hekaton, the referee slowly walked to Hekaton and declared him the winner.

“Hey hey! You didn’t hear him surrender did you?”

“I can’t let this go on anymore.”

The referee replied in a monotone voice.
Jeers could be heard coming from the spectators.
Drink caps and trash were being thrown at Hekaton

“Don’t participate in this again you murderer~!”

“I’ll never let you take a quest from me!”

You can hear a lot of curses and insults being thrown at Hekaton.
Why did he go so far? What’s wrong with him?
I want this clenched fist of mine to meet his face.

“J-just what do you think of that, Shitakka-san?”

“This result was determined from the beginning. Nikka’s potential wasn’t very high in the first place. Hekaton’s experience won this fight, just like I said.”

“Do you even remember what you said yourself a short while ago!?”

The reporter and commentary tried to lighten things up a bit, but they couldn’t settle down the crowd.
The 2nd match will be in about 15 minutes.
I saw Nikka being carried out on a stretcher with Ritta rushing over, so I followed them.

Both of Nikka’s hand and legs had plaster on them. It looked really pitiful. There were a lot of healers and priests at the clinic that used Medical magic.

“Onii-chan…Even though I said not to…why…?”

“I’m sorry Ritta…I couldn’t show you my courage.”

“Courage?”

“I was a bad brother when we were young. I lost every fight and couldn’t study well. Isn’t it painful for you to have such an idiotic brother? Despite all that, I managed to become A-rank. It’s a small thing, but I wanted to be a brother you could be proud of…I wanted to show you the results of my hard work with that fight….but I wasn’t even able to do that, was I? I wanted to become a splendid brother…haha…It seems I was just an annoyance, huh?”

“I don’t think of you as annoying, not one bit! But I can’t stand seeing Onii-chan in such danger…Please, just understand my feelings…”

Ritta cried while laying her head on her brother’s chest. Nikka was gently brushing Ritta’s hair.
I see. Everything was for Ritta.
I was participating for myself…Nikka was doing it for someone else.

To become a brother his younger sister could be proud of…
Even though we didn't fight, I feel like I've lost to this person.

"So you were here, Ryua."

"Seigel-san…Roel and Cynthia as well."

"Ryua-chan, how is Nikka doing?"

"I didn't expect so many visitors…Well, I still have a long way to go before I reach my limit. I don't think those words are what I need to say to myself though…hahaha…"

Seigel approached Nikka and brushed his hand along the plaster.
His eyes had hate, sorrow, and tiredness dwelling within them.

"Hekaton…for you to go this far…"

"Just watching made me so angry! How is someone like that an adventurer!? That man is just a scoundrel! Everyone watching was angry as well!"

Cynthia was stomping her feet in anger.
Roel couldn't speak upon seeing Nikka's condition.

"That guy is strong, and he has achievements. That's why."

"Regardless of achievements, I don't want someone like that to be my escort!"

"That guy's specialty is bounty hunting. He takes quests like that."

"That's right."

Hekaton was standing at the entrance to the room.
He had a mocking smile on and entered the room nonchalantly.
I won't let him near Nikka again. I blocked Hekaton's path as he approached Nikka's bed.

"Ooh, what's this?"

"Get out."

"Such a young kid is going to protect him? I heard the entire conversation from earlier you know. Such a sad story. You're actually quite splendid. Nevertheless, with limbs like that you can't do anything anymore, can you? You'll be nursed by your sister for the rest of your life! Hahahahahahahahaahha-"

I seized his collar. Even though Ritta was crying and couldn't talk back, I won't just let Hekaton say what he wants. I won't forgive this guy.

"What do you think you're doing? Take your hand off me."

"You're not human-!"

Just as I was about to strike Hekaton, Seigel held my arm and shook his head.

"Settle this during the match."

It wasn't a joke. He was serious.
Although he's not wrong. If I lashed out here, then it won't change anything.
I slowly let go of Hekaton, and he laughed triumphantly.

"The match huh…? Yeah. Lose to me, or prove you're the genuine article."

Hekaton burst into laughter again while he left.
I don't think I could get any more infuriated with him.
I'll teach you your place.

"Isn't your match soon?"

That's right. I need to hurry.
My opponent is Amane-san…I wonder how she fights? I have no idea what to expect, but my mind is currently dominated by the thought of beating Hekaton down.

As I walked into the corridor I passed by a shadow.
I didn't have the time to stop and look, but I'm pretty sure it was Inoro.
Why is he here? I only saw his face briefly, but his eyes seemed cold.
I just let it go as I rushed to the coliseum entrance.

///

There was someone staring from behind, but whenever she turned around there was nobody there.
Roel kept turning around each time she felt the chill.

"Roel-chin, what's wrong?"

"Err, nothing. We need to hurry before Ryua-chan's match starts!"

Roel left the clinic and double-checked her surroundings. As she thought, nobody was there.
She concluded it had to be her imagination.
Ryua's match is more important anyways.
In the distance, a shadow that went by unnoticed stood and looked at her.

Chapter 38 – Avangard Tougi Taikai Part 6

Therefore, we arrive at the second match. A woman was standing before me. She had no weapons, but her body seems really sturdy. Her exposed, dark skin tightened as it was bathed in the sunlight. It seemed like her body was shining.
I had seen her body swell in the waiting room before, perhaps she'll get like that again when

she fights.

“2nd Match, Ryua vs. Amane! Shitakka-san, what are your thoughts on this fight?”

“Let me see…if I were to make a comparison it would be between an ant and…no, more like a fight between a dragon and a <Cave Rabbit>. The handle of that young girl’s sword is practically spotless, and that lack of use leads me to believe she has little combat experience.”

“I recall you saying something similar before, but thank you for your analysis!”

So, a dragon and a rabbit…do I really look that frail? Roel, who’s in the spectator seats, knows differently right? But if I don’t win this fight, then I won’t be able to fight Hekaton.

“Are you going to draw the blade burdening your shoulder? If you are worried about me, you are being unnecessarily kind. I hate being looked down upon, just so you’re aware. A person that doesn’t honor their opponent in battle is an unsightly bastard.”

Her brow wrinkled, and her muscles had already expanded. She seemed quite mad.
She shifted her body into a half-rising stance; she seemed perfectly prepared for this.
Looking down…I never realized it.
I never meant to look down on any of my opponents…I don’t intend to do that to her.
I drew my sword in an attempt to satisfy her.
It seemed to have worked because she didn’t have that angry expression on her face anymore.

“It seems the contestants are almost ready! First Main Fight Card! She has driven many male opponents into a corner, and leaving them unable to recover she has finally reached the finals! <Heroine of the 100 Empires>, Amane! In this corner is her opponent, having easily defeated the 98th A-rank Benkei, 57th A-rank Baste, as well as the 97th A-rank Griiman for her representative match, our dark horse of this tournament! C-rank <Surprising Girl> Ryua! The match between these two will be starting now!”

“Whether man or woman, I will be merciless to my opponent in combat!”

“Well then, Battle Start!”

Would it be fine for me to fight her seriously? My brute strength alone punched through Griiman’s armor…
Ever since leaving the <Caves of Hell>, I haven’t been in any danger. After giving it some thought, I realized I came out of it way stronger than I could have ever dreamed of being.
If there was someone stronger than the <King of Destruction> Vanda Lucia…what would I do? However there’s no point thinking about that right now since nobody here was as strong as him.
Oh…maybe Tifelia-san?
I haven’t tried fighting her yet, but out of all the people I have met since leaving the caves, she was the only one to give me this strange feeling…
I want to try…fighting that person.

Amane charged at me with her swollen body, and her fist flew right into my sword.
I didn't find her strength to be difficult to handle whatsoever, but there was still more force than I expected.
Her merciless fists came flying at me in rapid succession.
I blocked them all with my sword, but there was no time to try to find an opening in her rain of blows.

"So it's a defensive battle you want, huh? Or have you not shown your hand yet? Well then, <Hundred Water Break Palm Bullets>!"

Her attacks became twice as heavy when she said that. It wasn't like any of her hundred punches from before; I could hear the insides of my Mithril sword breaking.
Amane-san has quite a bit of power behind her; this kind of attack is something you couldn't just forget about.
I wonder how much she trained to achieve this level of strength?
If she entered the <Caves of Hell>, she may have reached the bottom faster than me.
Well, I didn't enter the caves knowingly; I just wandered inside.
Any strong person could have cleared it.
Unpleasant thoughts like that began to pop up in my mind as the sound of my breaking sword became clearer.

"Don't rely on weapons! Your body is the only thing you need! Do you understand? If you rely on a weapon, you become a weak woman the moment you don't have it! Training your fists makes those beast-like men worthless opponents! Rely on your body! Not those useless and fickle weapons!"

"Amane-san…sorry…"

"No matter how many times you apologize, you won't earn victory!"

I've been half-hearted towards my opponents until now…
After conquering the <Caves of Hell>, it's highly unlikely that I will lose anymore.
I never thought about the effort that others have put in to become strong…
That's why I apologized. That's why this time, I will answer properly–
with this one punch.

"Amane-san, here I come!"

Up until now, I haven't ever used this much strength in one go.
Amane-san's flesh was torn off and blood spewed out.
A fissure appeared on the platform as if my fist never stopped.
Amane couldn't process what just happened, she was unable to guard the punch and fell on the ground.
There was a huge amount of blood…did I overdo it?
I ran over to her as the referee declared the match over.

"Vi-victor, Ryua!"

The surrounding healers were casting <Heal> while soldiers carried Amane out on a stretcher. Her muscles had been expanded up to this point, but underneath those bulging and shiny muscles was a beautiful woman.

“Did you…just see that?”

“It was like ham being sliced…Amane-chan’s body was…was…was…my bride was-!”

“Are they going to use that platform for the next match?”

Cheers could be heard from the spectator stand, and I noticed Tifelia was looking at me.
She had a satisfied smile on her face, I wonder what she was thinking?
Hekaton had his arms crossed with an expressionless face.

“Is that, by chance, a natural star?…That kind of diamond in the rough isn’t just a genius. That was definitely the star of the match…”

I have no idea what Rupee is saying.
Kweed was standing behind him, I don’t think he even watched my match. He was caressing his scabbard.
Creepy.

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“Do a thorough investigation of that C-rank. I can’t even imagine leaving such a thing alone.”

“No, that girl should join my guild, the <Royal Knights>. I won’t let her wander into a guild with no order or pride.”

“And a representative of your <Royal Knights> guild was defeated in the 3rd round of the preliminaries, no?”

“It couldn’t be helped because the opponent was the <Master Knight>.”

“So the one that gave up was the 3rd rate guild.”

“I’ll take that insult as a challenge.”

The spectator seats were abuzz with reactions to my match.
There were those who recognized my strength, some thought it was a fluke.
Some fights even broke out…

“I wonder why Ryua-chan did that? I’ve never seen her serious before…”

“That Amane-chan is lower ranked than me, but if we just look at her strength, even a superior A-rank would succumb to her. Did you unconsciously come to the conclusion that she was weaker than me just because she is a lower rank than me?”

///

Roel was watching over Ryua as she left the match grounds.
The seats in front of her had the other participants sitting in a line.
Among them, there was one wearing a black robe. As soon as she made eye contact, she let out a shriek.
The black-robed person was staring at Roel from a distance.
He never even looked at the fight. His eyes kept their focused gaze on Roel, constantly tracking her, even though she was just one girl in a sea of spectators.

"Roel, is something wrong?"

"N-no, it's nothing."

"Is that so?"

"If you aren't feeling well, why not go rest for a bit? Ryua-chan won't be having a match for a while anyways."

"I-I'm fine."

The black-robed person did not move an inch.

///

"It ended in an instant, the outcome was totally unexpected…the biggest uproar of this tournament so far! Now onto the next card! <Sky Crown> Rupee vs. Kweed!"

Kweed was caressing his scabbard, but when his match was about to begin, his mouth turned upwards into a wide grin as he left for the field. His grin looked disgusting.
The fight isn't for enjoyment. It's almost as he was pleased about something else.
Rupee stood up from his seat and stopped moving.
I wonder what he's going to do?

"Oh, star…please assure me…and then the many stars of victory…will be in my hands!"

He looked up and started talking to the sky. Geez, I've had enough of these people.

"Shitakka-san, I already know that Rupee uses star magic, but how does Kweed fight?"

"At first glance he looks like a gloomy guy, but he comes to life when he's fighting. You can say that those long bangs of his can be the key to the fight."

"Wait a minute, I can't tell if you're being serious or not."

The 2 people standing on the platform don't even look like they're interested in each other.
Rupee was still holding his arms out while talking and Kweed continued to caress his scabbard while muttering something to himself.
Even the Referee was weirded out by it and took a step back.

“E-eh, well then. Battle Start!”

It starts. ‘I wonder how they’re going to fight’ is what I thought, but the 2 of them weren’t moving at all. It’s no good if they stay like this. ‘Are the 2 of them unwilling to fight?’ is what I started to think, but then Rupee made the first move.

“Kweed-kun, I can see an omen of the Star of Death in you.”

I can hear something get closer from the sky. Is that the sound of the air being pushed?
The sound quickly passed over the spectator seats, striking fear into the hearts of the audience. With just that, I understood what was coming.
Screams erupted from the stands, and someone even got up and ran away.
A rock was descending from the sky. Although, calling a meteorite would be better.
It’s falling towards the coliseum, so of course it would cause a panic.
It was still far away, but as it got closer, I began to understand just how fast it was.

“<Star Magic: Comet>.”

The meteorite rushed towards the platform. To be precise, it’s aimed right at Kweed’s sword.
It looked like Kweed raised his sword to the sky and with just that, defended himself from the meteorite.
The meteorite broke apart and fell down to the ground in pieces.

“Fuhi-fuhihi, it’s going to be ok since you’ll be sucking blood soon! Hihihiihihi!”

He was so different before the match started.
His eyes were bloodshot. Saliva was drooling from the corner of his mouth and he had long, disheveled hair. It was as if he was a totally different person.
He was shaking his shoulders as he was laughing creepily. He hunched his back and placed his sword on it.

“Just as I thought, you’ve been corrupted. I might not be able to hold back in this situation, but I don’t want to be too flashy here.
Now then, I wonder which star I should request-”

For the first time, Rupee used a normal tone.

“J-just now, that was the Star magic we’ve heard about in rumors! What scale-!”

“However, Rupee hasn’t shown his full power yet. No, he can’t show it would be more correct. His star magic has a wide area of effect with great destructive power. Like that, he won’t be able to use it here.”

Certainly, I wonder what would have happened if Kweed wasn’t able to block that meteorite. That’s dangerous. Roel and the others are here you know.

“The numerous shining stars of illusions and reality, give me the power to create…<Stardust

Memory>!”

All eyes were on Rupee as something like a starry sky spread out.
Something like an air bubble appeared there. The starry sky covered only the platform and, at the same time, cut it off.
Kweed was looking around restlessly as he watched the surroundings change, but once he looked at his sword, his mood got restored.

“With this star, you can see all the data that has been recorded. A sword as dangerous as that, surely it’s within the memories of the stars.
Anything you do now is pointless. The star is processing the sword’s origin, and it will purge you.”

“That’s not something for yOUouu to DEcide!”

When Kweed went for the kill, one of the stars shot directly towards Kweed.
It felt like even the action of killing was sealed off.
Even though it only went as far as grazing his shoulder, Kweed looked like he was going to keel over. He was staggering.
Not ignoring this chance, Rupee used another meteorite attack.
This time there were 3 aiming at Kweed.
It was even faster than before. Kweed, being unable to deal the attack, was once again grazed by the meteorites as they passed by.
His shoulder, waist, and leg were only brushed by the meteors, but it seemed to have dealt considerable damage to him. Kweed screamed as the wind pressure caused him to spin around and fall over.

“Gugi-gigigi-”

“If that star had hit you dead on, you would’ve lost your life. If I went serious on you, it would take one meteorite. Can you surrender already? Are you really satisfied with relying on your sword so much?”

“I’ll kill you! I’ll kill you, I’ll kill you!…I WILL KIIIIIILL YOOOOOOOOOOOOU!”

A black fog spewed from Kweed’s body and was absorbed by his sword. A black aura started emanating from the blade.
Kweed’s face didn’t even look human anymore. It reminded me more of a reptile. His eyes were protruding from his face, and his mouth was spread out much further than normal. Combine that with his long hair, he looks almost like a monster.

“Kweed’s sword transformed him!?”

“It seems like Kweed poured magical power into his blade. He’s trying to recover from this hopeless situation.”

Are you sure about that? I don’t think he has any idea what he’s talking about.
I get the feeling magical power wasn’t poured into it, but rather his sword absorbed it.

It seems like Kweed is having a hard time breathing as well.
Without fear of meteors, Kweed sprinted at Rupee.

"You still want more…? I have no choice. This may kill you, but please don't resent me for it. <Meteor Clutch>!"

Meteorites approached from all directions, flying at Kweed. They were moving much faster than the previous attack.
He may actually kill Kweed with this.
However, Kweed rotated his body just before impact.
He slashed and slashed, you could hear the meteorites falling to the ground.
As they hit the ground, they were absorbed by Kweed's sword.

"Tsk! Oh, star! Don't let this Evil approach me!"

The surrounding stars shone at the same time, and suddenly meteorites were fired.
"He won't be able to dodge this," is what was plastered on the faces of the spectators.
Some screamed, some cheered, and Rupee's meteors barreled down to kill Kweed.
…the countless stars, and even Rupee, were sliced. Rupee's face showed he had no idea what just happened.

"W-why is it like that…? I'm not being malicious here…but please, throw that blade away… before…you…"

Rupee collapsed before he could finish talking.

Blood pooled onto the match grounds, and the referee was stunned. He was prompted urgently to continue and he declared the match over.

"Victor…Kweed!"

The end was called a little late, but the match ground was covered in cheers. Kweed's bloodshot eyes gave the impression he could go wild at any time.
"What should I do?" I thought, but he obediently descended from the platform.
What kind of sword is that? It's hard to express in words, but something about that sword seems…corrupt.
It was almost like Rupee's blood was absorbed, there was no dripping blood to be seen on Kweed's blade.
Is Rupee still unconscious? I can see him muttering something on the stretcher.
If Tifelia wins her match then she will be fighting Kweed. I wonder what she thinks about that match?

My left shoulder felt somewhat heavy. I turned to look and saw Tifelia-san leaning on it, sleeping. I feel kind of awkward asking her straight out about her thoughts on the match.
Her leaning on me is somewhat bothersome, so I used my arm to prop her into a sitting position.
She instantly opened her eyes, and suddenly closed them and fell on my shoulder again.
She knows her match is next, right…?

///

"That sword sure is dangerous."

Seigel watched the match until the end with a serious face.
Roel and Cynthia were overwhelmed by the bizarre ability Kweed used.

"Dangerous, Seigel-san?"

"Among all the weapons and armor in the world, there are certainly some very strong ones, but they have…side effects. Although, that difference in strength to the point of coming back from such a situation…I've never seen something like that before. Just where did he get his hands on such a thing?"

"So something like that won't show up in a normal market?"

Roel was eating the sweets in her hand, only half were left. Cynthia was in deep thought about something. Roel's sweet count reduced by one again.
It's not that Cynthia wasn't interested in weapons and armor, but it wasn't her specialty. She couldn't answer Roel's question with her lack of knowledge.

"A normal market, huh?"

Seigel was surveying the match grounds. His eyes were drawn to the middle of the platform. He had no basis to go on, but he had a feeling…
Something was lurking there, trying to escape.

Chapter 39 – Avangard Tougi Taikai Part 7

Siegel went to the clinic to visit Rupee, who was staring at the ceiling.
They ended up forming a party after becoming acquaintances.
Rupee, noticing Seigel's figure in the room, smiled as he welcomed him.

"I saw your match. It was a disaster."

Seigel caught Rupee making a strange expression as he said 'disaster', but he didn't say anything. He had fought that sword in the past himself, so he understood.

"That sword…I don't recognize it."

"It looks like it wasn't even caught by your <Stardust Memory>."

Seigel understood the menacing nature of <Stardust Memory>.
Earlier on, in Rupee's match, Seigel had been eyeing that sword. His exterior may have stayed calm and collected, but he felt the corrupted presence.

"You can say that the Sun saw it. It happened right beneath that bright star, the fight and all was recorded by it. I pull that knowledge out from space and analyze it. That move

calculated his movements and traits, predicted how he would act, and sealed all of his techniques. Saying that his counter was foul play is no exaggeration. Is his sword not recorded?"

"He fights like it was recorded, but his movements almost seemed like they belonged to another person."

Somewhat odd, just as he thought. Seigel cast a cold glare around the clinic. Some superior A-ranks have been sent all around the Imperial Capital as security, and they travelled under water so the festival wouldn't be hindered. Every year, many soldiers are dispatched for the festival. Only newcomers are spared by being given some days off or odd jobs. Thankfully, Rupee had used defensive magic before being hit, so he avoided any mortal wounds. Once Rupee was healed, Seigel planned to probe around. He concluded Rupee felt the same.

"Tifelia-san, the match! The match-"

Tifelia was finally woken up by Ryua's stubborn shaking.
She rubbed her eyes and looked around, figuring out why she was woken up.
Without forgetting to say "Good morning", Tifelia ascended to the match ground without her weapon or armor.
Tifelia moved about unsteadily and drowsily as Ryua saw her off, hoping to finally see some of Tifelia's strength.
Ryua was wondering if Tifelia was truly stronger than her. Tifelia let out a large, contrasting yawn to those thoughts.

"It's finally here! This tournament's biggest expectation! The appearance of <Master Knight> Tifelia-chan!"

The cheers were vibrating the coliseum, and the spectators created large waves of hands that rolled and rippled through the stands.
There were also some people who wrote things, such as "Tifelia LOVE". The length of some of those posters was just too much, for the to be able to move the hearts of so many people…

Ryua admired her a little, but…

"*sigh*…so noisy…"

"I want to hear that sigh as I am about to die! No, as I'm dyiiiiiiiiing!"

She placed her hand on her face as the annoying cheers continued on.
That gesture seemed to make her fans burn up even more; they became rabid in the stands with their overflowing enthusiasm.

"And her opponent, the mysterious man, Inoro! With the exception of magic usage, there isn't any data on him! What in the world will he show us today?"

"Attack magic is probably his specialty."

“I already know that! Well then, let’s see what happens!” 1st round, 4th match!”

Inoro silently glared towards the bored Tifelia.

He was shorter than Tifelia, almost looking like a child.

Other than his odd robe, he had a mysterious aura about him. Alhough, it was a child versus an adult. The result was obvious from a glance.
‘This isn’t an opponent for the <Master Knight>’ was a common thought among the spectators.

“Tifelia vs. Inoro! Start!”

Even though they were told to start, Tifelia behaved just as she had in the preliminaries, unwilling. Inoro was waiting on Tifelia to make the first move.

“Are both of them just waiting for the other? There aren’t any signs of movement!”

“When you fight against someone at a similar level, the match can be decided in an instant. Really, considering what we know about Inoro, can you grasp his true strength from his appearance?”

Ryua swallowed her saliva while watching them.
She was more curious about Tifelia than Inoro.
Inoro moved first; it seems he ran out of patience.
However, he didn’t use any magic. He slowly approached Tifelia.

“H-hold on! What does Inoro plan to do!? Tifelia-chan is responding-”

Tifelia finally noticed Inoro as he got close, and partly opened her mouth while winking. Inoro thought she was playing dumb.

“Umm, what is it?”

The spectators were expecting a fierce fight, and Ryua had been let down by the outcome before her. “Tifelia-san, what are you doing!?” Ryua felt irritated and she was acting like a child, tapping the floor with her feet.

“<Master Knight> Tifelia. If she judged the opponent unworthy, she wouldn’t even look at them. Just like the data we have on her implies.”

“*Sigh* is that so?”

“However, that will be a fatal decision.”

Standing before Tifelia, Inoro quickly cut his own hand.
Blood appeared on Tifelia.
Her mouth was still partly open, even she was surprised from this.
She didn’t wipe the dripping blood, instead she finally looked at her opponent from his head

to his feet.

"Umm…how are you going to clean this?"

"You don't need to worry. The need to pay for it will soon disappear, since you'll be going to the other side soon. You and that stupid face you're making."

"Eh, I really don't feel like disappearing."

"…I give up."

The live reporter, commentary, and spectators all went silent while watching the development in front of them. You couldn't even call this a match. The referee didn't even respond to Inoro's "I give up". He repeated himself to make sure the referee heard him.

"Ha? Sorry, what?"

"I said I give up. The victory goes to Tifelia."

The match was aborted by Inoro, and he descended from the match grounds, vanishing into the waiting room.

"*Sigh*" Tifelia seems to want to say something, but there was nothing to be delighted about. She followed suit and also descended from the match grounds.
Although Ryua had been looking forward to the fight, she didn't understand why it ended like it did. It was a huge letdown. She finally released her clenched fist.

"It ended after some blood spilled? What's with that…"

Ryua wasn't really asking anyone, she was just talking to herself.

"Ah geez…the blood won't come off…*sigh*…but I saw something that works before. If you tap and cover it with the end of a daikon…I want to tap it…"

Tifelia's gaze changed from her dirtied clothes to Ryua.
She smiled at Ryua, and Ryua couldn't help but return a fake smile.
Ever since Ryua had left the <Caves of Hell>, she hadn't met a person like Tifelia before.

"It's going to be your match next, right? I watched your previous fight closely. It was amazing. You were going easy, but to have that much power…"

"So you weren't sleeping…"

This person easily saw through Ryua and that she had been going easy. Ryua thought if it was this person, then she could easily read her mind.

"Ah, it'll be your turn very shortly, you know."

"Well then, it's the 2nd round of the finals! 1st match! Ryua vs. Hekaton!"

Hekaton was already on the match grounds in a daunting pose.
Ryua jumped towards the platform, a little disorganized. Hekaton was laughing.
He looked down at everything. Ryua hated this large person.
Considering what happened with Ritta, Ryua wondered what she'll do in this match.
She came to a swift conclusion. Hekaton wasn't fazed when he saw Amane get one-shot, and it also seems like he considers this match already won.
He crushes his opponents, tramples their heart, and destroys them.
It was like that time with Gametts. Ryua's heart was smothered in fury, a blue flame silently burning.

"You, don't be thinking that you can down me in one blow like you did that muscle woman."

"I think I can, you know."

Ryua didn't want to talk to Hekaton anymore, she felt like vomit would come out.
She had been speaking in a low tone. You couldn't think of her as a little girl, she was more like a knife.

"Brat."

Hekaton rotated his prided hammer once in the sky and then swung it down to strike the platform. If his opponent had been a more normal person, then they would have felt threatened.
Ryua wasn't affected at all.
The <Caves of Hell> had monsters that made your hair stand on end.
Watching this adult swinging his toy hammer around made her feel nothing.

"Shitakka-san! That girl, with her monster-like strength, is she well matched against Hekaton?"

"It depends entirely on potential. You can't determine how strong someone is before the match."

"This guy. Only saying potential."

The referee stood between the two of them and finally announced the start of the match.
The atmosphere was unusual between Hekaton and Ryua, the referee instantly took a step back from them.

"Now then, I'll be starting. Also, I'll tell you something good. The King over there will appreciate even someone like me. In short, strength is justice. Did you listen to him earlier? I murdered someone last time, but I wasn't barred from participating this time. What does that tell you?"

Hekaton held his hammer with two hands and brandished it like he did earlier. It seems like he will put as much strength as he can into every strike.
A crack and the rumbling ground from a single strike shows how strong he is.
However, Ryua had a look that said "So?"

Her eyes stayed focused, and her mouth was still. It was evident that Ryua didn't regard Hekaton as an opponent.

"Amane-san was an amazing person. That's why I reflected on the way I fought against her. But for you, it's different."

"Stop your babbling!"

He moved his hammer to his left hand and without delay struck at Ryua.
"I won't be hit by such a thing," Ryua said as she dodged. Hekaton's hammer suddenly switched into his other hand and was swung at her again.
Like bullet holes, the amount of stamps that the hammer made on the platform increased.
He was controlling his hammer like he was beating a drum, rhythmically striking at Ryua.

"HeiHei! Heiheihei!"

His tone matched the timing of the bullet hole being made. Due to the rumbling it caused, many of the spectators were screaming, and some of the female spectators were crying.
The storm of hammer attacks were evaded easily, Ryua dodged to the beat.

"W-what an intense attack! Ryua isn't even being given a chance to fight back!"

"This is Hekaton's <Grand Ram>. The strikes cover a large area and the vibrations prevent the opponent from taking a proper stance. This drains their stamina, and when they get tired the attack will eventually hit. Even if the opponent is an expert, he would have to avoid every strike from start to finish. If you look closely at Hekaton, it seems like he enjoys driving his opponents into a corner like this."

"It feels like we finally received a proper explanation this time around!"

Hekaton's large hammer kept falling towards Ryua.
The match platform had become the drum for Hekaton's beat, and the shockwaves from each swing were attacking Ryua.

"Yoiyoiyoi! Yoiyoiyotto!"

The match platform had been destroyed to the point where it couldn't be used anymore. Since it was known that A-ranked fighters would be participating, the match grounds had been made of a stone that was almost as hard as orihalcon. Even so, it had been dented by the sheer force of the hammer.
Hekaton was trying to instill fear into Ryua with his strength. He was under the impression she was getting exhausted.
However, her expression hadn't changed.

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"That Ryua, just what is she doing?"

“Oh! Gantetsu-san, you came.”

“It doesn’t seem like she’s unable to resist but more like she doesn’t want to. Seigel, what do you think?”

“It seems the situation at the clinic is in her head. She probably has a child-like scheme.”

“Ryua-han ih noht heeeming at all!”

Roel was stuffing her mouth with a buttered potato while desperately protesting, but she was only able to persuade them after swallowing and speaking properly.

///

“Do you think that you can keep evading?”

Ryua wasn’t replying as usual, she just kept evading his hammer. “I wonder if I should finish him in one hit…” Ryua thought, but she decided to wait a little more. She wanted to utterly crush him.

“So you hate me? Look around and think a little. There will always be someone that laughs down at those in front of them. To point out the weak from a group and exclude them, keeping them safe and giving them peace of mind. Human beings can’t do that, you know?”

While he was talking, little sparks of electricity were arcing from his arm to his hammer.
The noise slowly increased in volume, and eventually the electricity influxed his entire hammer.

“Seeing scum like that rise up to A-rank makes me excited, once again I can crush…”

The expressionless Hekaton finally showed an unpleasant smile.
Ryua couldn’t help but feel disgusted looking at it.
“More ugly than a monster,” was her impression.
She understood that the “scum” insult was aimed at Nikka.
She clenched her teeth, but she didn’t draw her sword.

“You’re worse than Grundom.”

Neither Grundom nor Hekaton can change. No matter what Ryua says, it won’t move them.
Hekaton, as if ending the banter, jumped into the air. He assumed a stance, preparing to swing his hammer.
He jumped high enough to see over the walls of the coliseum, it was his way of showing off his strength.

“I’ll teach you! In the end, it’s all about power! No matter what they do, if they don’t have power then you can do nothing but howl like a loser! You can’t protect anything without power! You crumble in the face of reality! That’s how that guy ended up…and with this, you might die. Resent me as much as you want!

THOOOOOOOR HAMMEEEEER!”

Electricity streamed from his hammer and fell, it wasn’t aimed at Ryua but rather the center of the platform.
Not even a floor monster, let alone a human, could bear the voltage of that bolt. All of the cells in the body would be annihilated, and it would cease to exist. This was Hekaton’s strongest skill: . The light and sound this move emitted caused the spectators to be blinded, most were covering their heads and protecting their bodies as much as they could.
This skill was fear incarnate.
He planned to kill Ryua from the start.
Originally he had been fine with whatever, but “Crush the spoiled brat!” was his only purpose at this point.
He felt no greater pleasure than at this moment, achieving his goal.
This was the only time he felt any pleasure.

“What the…”

——The light disappeared, and standing in the middle of the platform was Ryua.

Hekaton’s smile vanished.
Ryua had dared to take on the full brunt of his <Thor Hammer>.
She pinned the hammer with one hand.
The current had long since scattered, in front of him wasn’t the form of a helpless girl.
Cracks started to appear in his hammer, and it was smashed to pieces.
With just her grip, his special weapon was pulverized.
Hekaton was just…looking.

“Old man, you’re weak.”

With that one phrase, Hekaton became filled with rage.
With his hammer broken, he began to attack Ryua with his fists.
But with his strongest attack, <Thor Hammer>, being defended against so easily, brute strength wasn’t going to work either.

“You, you fucking braaaaaaaaaaat!! Don’t look down on us adults! Just who raised this arrogant girl!?

“So weak, you’re so weak. You put on such a big act, but I’m way stronger than you.”

“DIEEE!”

Even without a weapon, Hekaton is by no means weak.
With his physique and brute strength, his unarmed prowess is beyond that of a monk’s.
However, if one of the monsters from the <Caves of Hell>, where Ryua fought, were to leave the dungeon, they can destroy the world. That’s how strong the monsters there are.
Ryua didn’t have any way of knowing the details of the monsters inside the <Caves of Hell>.
Within it, she fought a monster called <Gigas Atlas> that, with just one punch, can destroy a

country.
Ryua recalled that giant, even though she didn't know it had such a name, while purposely letting Hekaton hit her on the head.

"Gi-giyaaaaaaaaa!"

It was like punching something harder than steel; Hekaton's fist took damage.
Hekaton's right hand was completely broken.

"Running away from something you can't do, something you can't face. Trampled with regrettable thoughts as if cursed. Ever since I was a child, I have always endured it. You didn't have to go that far when you fought Nikka. After we're done here, apologize."

"J-just what are you babbling about you braaaat!"

He punched out with his remaining left hand, then a kick. He wasn't able to move the girl standing there an inch. Hekaton's pride wouldn't let him recognize their difference in strength.

"J-just what kind of support magic did you get? Don't you know the rules? This is a f-foul play you know! Referee! Disqualify this guy!"

"I won't. From what I have seen, there wasn't any kind of support magic used this whole time…"

"You blockhead! How can you say that? Oi! Can't you see? This guy is cheating! You understand, right!?"

Those in the audience; the participants waiting in standby, Tifelia and Kweed; and the King who was overlooking all, Hekaton raised his voice for everyone to hear; seeking someone with the same opinion.
Pathetic. Anyone he looked to would immediately look away.
Tifelia was only interested in Ryua. She was the only one she was looking at. Since the very beginning, she was never interested in Hekaton.
Most likely, that voice didn't even reach her ears.

"Hekaton, you lose."

"So noisy, would you shut up!?"

No matter what he does, the situation isn't going to get any better.
The referee was also surprised by Ryua's strength, but was even more shocked by this lastest exchange.

"Y-you, what's your level!?
Answer me! Answer me! Answer me!"

"999…"

“Oi, referee! This guy is doping!”

Ryua planned to end this now.
She would crush Hekaton’s self-confidence and make him take back what he said to Nikka at the clinic.
That was what she thought at first.
That thought was immediately lost after Hekaton uttered his next words.

“That brat…isn’t she your companion? Hehehehe, don’t look down on the <Crusher>. If I don’t like someone, then I will chase them until they are one with the earth. You understand right? Because of you, your little blonde friend is going to experience something horrible.
Hihihihihihi…now then, what would yo-ku!”

Those were Hekaton’s last words.
Ryua’s fist met with Hekaton’s cheek.
His skull was pulverized as her fist easily dug into the side of his head. Hekaton’s body crashed right under the spectator seats.
All of his teeth were broken, his whole body was flinching and he lost consciousness.
The wall crumbled and the rubble fell onto Hekaton.
It all happened so fast that the referee wasn’t able to react and was watching, dumbfounded.

“Ha!? Ah, let’s see.”

The referee rushed over to Hekaton’s side, before soon announcing Ryua’s victory.

“Victor…Ryua.”

Though they were noisy up until the middle of the match, the live reporter and the commentary was silent, completely speechless.
They were too overwhelmed to think due to Ryua’s inhuman like strength.
The King’s expression didn’t change after watching the match.
However, he was clenching his hand. He was delighted about something.

The only ones who were happy and shouting ‘Banzai’ from the seats were Roel and Cynthia.
Gantetsu, who knew of Ryua’s strength during the incident, had no comment.

“Just as I thought, she’s a kid.”

Seigel let out a sigh after his murmur, it didn’t reach the ears of Roel who was delighted.

“Well…ufufufufu…”

Tifelia was in a good mood as she tapped her feet, unsuitable for a venue which was still taken aback from what had happened.
Several seconds after the declaration of the end of the match, the crowd began to go wild.

Chapter 40 – Avangard Tougi Taikai Part 8

The spectator seats started to empty during the break time.
There were some people walking around, some sleeping, and even some just munching away.
People were startled as I passed by them, and the gazes started to pile up.

"Your power will really shine with the <Royal Knights>!"

"If possible, I want you to join us. We're still not ready for this, nothing but terrible floor monsters-"

"E-eh, ah, I still have something to do-"

"She's embarrassed! How cute!"

"Ah…s-stop it…mugyu-"

There were various guilds inviting me left and right, and even some people who hugged me.
It seems that there's a guild besides Amane's that is all women. Almost every guild that approached me was searching for strong people.
I didn't even consider that people would be scouting for new members while I was fighting.
I became really embarrassed upon realizing that.
Up until now, nobody has given me so much attention. I don't know if this is a good or bad thing.
I managed to slip away from that troubling situation.

It seems like Tifelia's next match will be in 30 minutes, so I decided to talk to Roel and everyone else to kill time.
Nikka told Ritta to come and watch the match, it seems like Ritta also came to watch my fight.
Ritta had been somewhere in the distance, it seems she became my fan along the way.
Unfortunately, her favourite was Tifelia, so I'm number 2 to her.

"Amazing, why are you so strong even though you're just a C-rank?"

"Please, let us listen to your adventures!"

The barrage of questions overhwhelmed me. I'm originally bad at conversations, so I don't know how to properly tell my story. Almost nobody was able to follow along.
Roel was the exception, she was able to understand me. Thanks to her being there, Ritta's eyes were glistening.
She's here since it's her day off from her soldier duties.

"It's unusual to have a day off during such a busy time. Up until last year, this event was so busy and a lot of soldiers were done in by the atmosphere. Most of the newbies collapsed. I remember a time when even I, Gantetsu, was that busy."

“There’s also a night shift for the soldiers, right? That’s gotta be difficult since people are used to sleeping at night.”

“It would be relentless to those guys who only work to make money. If you don’t love your job, you won’t do the work well.”

Gantetsu and Cynthia were talking about jobs. I decided to leave them alone since they were so into the conversation. Ritta was enrapt from talking to Roel and myself, and with great excitement, she asked about Roel’s <Fire Rod> .

“Fire comes out from this!?”

“Yeah, it completely burns what it touches.”

“Completely!? It’s expensive, right?”

“Probably, but I got it as a gift you know.”

She’s telling a little bit of a fib there. She doesn’t completely burn them, but turns them into ashes. I’ve seen it happen a lot of times. I think it’s best to stay silent this time though.

“Ryua-san, you’re the same age as me, right? That’s amazing…I need to work hard-”

“Ritta, why did you join the castle soldiers?”

“I wanted to get close to Tifelia-san…I’m happy just being by her side.”

Was that her sole reason for becoming a soldier?
I definitely couldn’t do it. I agree with Gantetsu that being a soldier is relentless. I became an adventurer due to how things ended up going, but it would be impossible for me to become a castle soldier, even if asked.

“Ah, Ryua-san is also fantastic, I respect you a lot.”

She didn’t have to follow up like that…

Suddenly, I saw Seigel enter my field of vision. I stopped for a moment while looking at him. He sat in his seat and placed his elbow onto his knee, opening his mouth to speak to me.

“….You looked down on Hekaton as you fought him, Ryua.”

It was rare to see Seigel without his gaggle of girls. He was speaking in a serious tone, and he wasn’t looking at me while talking.
This isn’t like Seigel, being so serious.

“You were carelessly inviting death. After all this time we’ve been together, I didn’t want to preach to you about it, but did you notice? Just like how Hekaton crushes people, you crushed him. At that moment, you and he were the same kind of person.”

“Same kind…? That guy and me…”

“You beat him down just like he does to others.”

“I…did the same thing as that guy…”

I fought back by punishing him. I didn’t think it was a bad thing to do, but Seigel’s words weigh heavily on me.
I mimicked Hekaton’s way of fighting.
That trash.

“I’m not trying to blame you for it. If you leave here today with the understanding of what you did in your heart, it’s not a loss.”

Everyone was silent.
Even though Roel would always cover for me, she was attentively listening to Seigel. Cynthia was also keeping her mouth shut.

“Though, I also just recently charged Gametts without thinking!”

His attitude took a 180 and he laughed as if deceiving himself.

Seigel had done the same thing as me–taking revenge because someone wronged another.
I also went to beat Gametts.
Why…even though this situation right now should be the same…why?
I couldn’t stop thinking about it.

“Oh, it looks like Tifelia’s match is about to begin.”

As if changing the topic, Seigel pointed at Tifelia-san who was standing on the match platform. I’m happy to see her fight again, but last time was a complete let down. The opponent just gave up, what the hell was that about?
If he didn’t come to fight, why did he participate?

“Semifinal 2nd match! Tifelia-chan vs. Kweed! Will <Master Knight> the show her prowess this time around?”

“Eeh, well, she might.”

“Shitakka-san, it’s fine if it’s impossible to talk about, you know?”

Yeah, yeah, just what does <Master Knight> mean?

She didn’t even carry a sword and was standing there with just casual clothes. I can’t see a knight standing there.
Her atmosphere is extremely disconnected from the match, it almost seemed like she would suddenly start cooking after this match.
Kweed, compared to the match before, had dangerous eyes.

Drool was dripping from the corner of his mouth, and he was holding his sword with both hands while hunching over.

"Now then, I wonder what Tifelia will do about that sword?"

"What are you saying? It's Tifelia, she'll easily win."

"I didn't mean that, you know."
I totally didn't understand so I stopped asking.
I'll figure it out once the match starts.
Tifelia-san started out sluggish again-

—no, the situation is different this time.

With only her sigh, it felt like the very air around them was shaking.
You could tell she saw Kweed as an opponent since she had been looking at him this whole time, unlike her other fights.
Could Kweed possibly be someone she is wary of?
From what Seigel said, it's actually the sword, not Kweed.

"Battle Start!"

Kweed slashed Tifelia before the referee finished his announcement. It was quite the intense slash, but I think most people could dodge it.
Tifelia-san avoided it with barely any movement.
You could hear a dry sound as she moved; she looked rather carefree as she dodged.

"Ihihi! That was dangerous…ain't you too good at this?!"

"*Sigh*….even though I would normally ignore this, the king ordered me…aaaah…but letting something like this go would be a bad thing to do, as a person…even so, annoying…so annoying…"

She kept avoiding Kweed's slashes, with a bored and annoyed look on her face.
Kweed wasn't discouraged, rather he was getting more excited as he vigorously attacked over and over, leaving no space for Tifelia-san to fight back.
Well, I say that, but it looks more like she can't be bothered to fight back.

"Though, I even forgot my sword…I need to deal with this somehow….<Saint Sword>"

Light shot up from Tifelia-san's hand.
The pillar of light slowly molded into a sword.
Tifelia-san, now engulfed by a radiant light, grasped the sword with her hand.

"I-it appeared?! One of the <Master Knight>'s <Omni-blade> techniques! Not even high class mage fighters can create such a radiant magic blade! Now it seems Tifelia-chan is showing us her fighting stance!"

“I was just about to say that.”

“Tifelia-chan is finally holding a weapon! How will Kweed cope with this?!”

Tifelia-san kept lazily avoiding Kweed. Is it just me, or is Kweed getting faster…?
Suddenly, that black fog from before leaked out of Kweed’s body again and went straight into the sword. Exactly like when Rupee was downed in one hit.

“Gihii! More, more, more, more, more! Grow! More power!”

“Aaah, geez…why did he have to bring that troublesome ability out…”

Kweed renewed his assault, but Tifelia-san blocked it with her <Saint Sword> . A radiant light slowly leaked from the <Saint Sword> and wrapped around Kweed’s blade.
He became flustered, seeing something abnormal happening to his sword.

“Gihii?”

“This will be over soon, ok? Don’t worry, just please stay still.”

Kweed had ignored her words, he was too focused on what was happening to his sword.
The light suddenly flickered.

“Gihii? Gihihihihihihi~”

After the light faded, nothing had changed with Kweed’s sword. He seemed relieved. Once again, Kweed began attacking Tifelia-san.

“Oh my…was that not enough…? Geez, so annoying…I have no choice it seems. <Weapon Break>.”

Tifelia totally ignored the large storm of slashes, like they were feathers being thrown at her. She casually walked up to Kweed and lightly hit his sword with her <Saint Sword> .

Clunk, the contact was over as fast as it happened, that sound rang out clear through the stadium.
Kweed’s blade was instantly broken into pieces.
He could only stare at the hilt remaining in his hand.

His eyes were swimming as he glanced all around, suddenly, he collapsed onto the ground.
It seems he lost consciousness, he was lying perfectly still and not moving a single inch.

“Referee-san, this is the end, right?”

“Ah, yes! Victor, Tifelia!”

Kweed collapsed from having his weapon broken? It didn’t seem like any of the spectators were curious about that, they were in an uproar, delighted about Tifelia-san’s victory.

“Ok ok, thank you. Make sure to take care of that person, since I’ll be taking care of this thing.”

Tifelia-san picked up the fragments of the sword she broke and leisurely walked out of the match grounds. Just what in the world was that? I wonder why she did that?

The moment that sword was broken, Kweed collapsed.
It was as if the sword itself was Kweed’s heart.
I gazed towards Kweed who was being carried out on a stretcher, but I still don’t know the answer.

“Seigel, what do you think?”

“That sword was in cursed in some way, or-”
Curse.
That’s right, and now I wonder why Kweed had used such a sword.
I don’t understand it.

“What I’m curious about is why Tifelia collected the weapon fragments. In all likelihood, the King ordered her to do it”

“The King did?”

“An S rank is already beyond a simple Adventurer. Even that really trouble avoiding Tifelia would abide by anything the king orders.”

“Seigel-san, about the curse inside the weapon. If the weapon is broken, does it make you collapse?”

“Beyond a simple adventurer” I was attracted to that really interesting point. I was about to ask a question but Roel interrupted by asking a question.

“Each of them has a different compensation. Beyond that, I can’t tell you much more. It’s not really my specialty.”

—-Suddenly, far away behind us, in the spectator seats, I felt a presence.
It was not blood thirst, it was a strange presence.
I turned around and at the same time, I saw a shadow quickly disappear.
What was that just now?

“Ryua, what is it? the next match is the Finals you know? You opponent is that Tifelia. You saw that match just now, right? That was the true meaning of <Master Knight>. <Omni-blade>Techniques.”

“O-omni-blade?”

“A <Master Knight> possesses about 10,000 sword techniques. Among those, there is a technique which a master swordsman mastered over decades. Summing up Tifelia’s

strength… Even if all A-ranks attack her, she wouldn't get a scratch. That's what kind of opponent she is."

It's mortifying if it's an opponent who can even overturn my 10 years in the Caves of Hell.
"I wonder just how amazing Tifelia-san is". I'm absolutely much stronger.
That is the only thing that I will absolutely believe.

—-Because I am.

I am?

I am…?

Right now, I wonder what I was about to think.

Sometimes, I feel really uncomfortable. Even though I am myself, it's like I am not myself.
Now that I think about it, I feel like there was something like this before too.
Right, at that time——

/ / /

"Tifelia, did you bring it?"

"Yes, right here."

Tifelia presented a cloth that held the fragments to the King.
Usually, she was a woman that even abandoned her responsibility. She was lazy, but even this time she would bow her head.
If this was just a cursed weapon, the King wouldn't even order such a thing by himself.
She may have been called because it was urgent. Tifelia didn't understand.

"My King, I will be receiving it."

The Prime Minister, Bermund. He had a bad appearance. He moved closer to Tifelia.
Tifelia normally isn't interested in any other people, but she had a feeling of hate towards this man.
The reason wasn't merely because he had an ugly old face.
He manages most of the official business in the kingdom. He only gets around 2 hours of sleep according to rumors. He is closer to the king than any bodyguard, and also took on the role as the food poisoning tester. To volunteer that much, he was being too attached to the king.
Having this strange sense of patriotism, it was one of the reasons she hated him.
From her mouth, only one word was fit for him. Disgusting. Right now, he isn't even worth being called a person.
In Tifelia's mind, she was scorning him.

"Umu, well done. Keep up the good word, I wish for a good match, you know?"

The king was not the one that uttered it. Those were Bermund's words, it was something like a proxy.
Tifelia understood that it was futile to ask. Just as she was asked, she went back towards the Match Ground.

"…really disgusting."

She had a loathsome face, similar to that of a demon without a shred humanity. It was that brutal.

Chapter 41 – Avangard Tougi Taikai Arc END

Today is the climax of the Tougi Taikai–the finals. The cheers during the matches before were incomparable to how it is now.
Coupled with Tifelia's popularity, there was even a banner waving "L-O-V-E" displayed there. Many people had their sights on Tifelia, but the dark horse Ryua was one of the hot stocks.

"The final match is upon us! No one has won against this person no matter what they do, <Master Knight> Tifelia! And the girl who reached the finals with great vigor, Ryua! Whether you cry or laugh, right now in this place, the victor will be decided!"

Tifelia was standing on the Match Grounds, but she was different compared to the matches before; she had a sword her hand, going so far as to picking up her sword from home before the final match, she was feeling that excited.
Twilight Bringer is the name of her weapon.
A combination of both a skilled craftsman and a rare material produced a weapon that only she can handle; there is only one in the whole world.
Seeing that sword, she remembered a tinge of anxiety.
Ryua doesn't know about the sword, but regarding her Mithril Sword, which Amane was hitting, it was not in a good condition.
Her sword was full of cracks; can it take on Tifelia's weapon?
Ryua stared at Tifelia, her expression wasn't like her usual smile, she was facing her with sharp eyes.

"That sword, its condition isn't looking too good. Is it okay?"

"It's fine."

"Is that so……"

Focusing on the air around Tifelia, it was as if the whole coliseum was attacked by a strong wind with her at the center of it. Spectators screamed as their personal belongings were blown everywhere from the wind. A crack appeared below Tifelia on the match grounds that were just fixed.

"Umm, you know I don't understand it. To go this far……are you looking down on me? Such a thing hasn't happened before, that's why… I didn't expect this far…….for my anger to

go into my head; I'm irritated. For my emotions to become something like this…"

Master Knights, or S-rankers, have their pride. Without considering the behavior of her opponent, Tifelia was quietly enraged towards Ryua's composure. At a glimpse, she looks gentle, but to tell you the truth, it wasn't like that at the center of the arena. Although the words weren't able to do it, Ryua felt it on her skin.

"Although Tifelia-san didn't fight that Inoro guy honestly."

"That's not true, you know."

"Lies."

"It's not."

Flatly rejecting it, she was expressionless as she said it. Her expression showed that she wouldn't allow any more rebuttals. It was almost time for the referee to announce the start of the match. This time, the voices of the noisy live reporter and commentator didn't reach Ryua's ears. Ryua slowly entered an attacking posture.

"Battle start." Ryua heard those words. Up until now, her opponent's strength is extraordinary. Ryua realized it in an instant as their distance grew shorter. It was not that she couldn't catch her speed, but she wasn't shown that she was serious yet, Ryua understood that. "If that's the case, then I should ask this way." Ryua took one swing towards Tifelia. However, the high-pitched sound of metal chimed; it was stopped.

"It sure is heavy."

From those murmurs, you couldn't feel any impatience. Those words were effectively saying, "So that's all."

"<Weapon Break>."

Without a need to even hear that murmur, Ryua evaded the hit. Ryua understood her weapon would share the fate of Kweed's blade in an instant due to her ample experience.

"<Burst Braver>."

Tifelia swung horizontally, and an explosion quickly followed ahead. Ryua wouldn't be able to evade it. There was only one way, and that was to take it head on.

"<Sonic Ripper>!"

The vacuum-like wave slashed and shaved off the match grounds while crushing the explosions.
Her attention didn't waver. If she was careless for a moment, Tifelia would land a direct hit on her.
However, Tifelia was only defenseless for an instant.

"<Reflect Parry>."

In only an instant, a barrier appeared before her, erasing the slash.

"…….So that sword can rival mine this far. I didn't think that it would make me use <Reflect Parry> in this situation. Your attack was strong enough that my barrier was unable to reflect it….."

"You too Tifelia-san, just how many techniques do you have…"

"Who knows? After going over 100, I stopped counting."

Just now, she wasn't able to properly measure Ryua's strength, but that was the reason for her carelessness.
The other Master Knights would scold her for her mistake, but at the same time, Ryua was verified as a worthy opponent.
She licked her lips and silently looked at Ryua.
With the glossiness of her lips, Ryua had a bewitching image of her.

Up until now, the spectators would be holding out one hand while watching, but right now, their hands came to a halt.
Everyone on the Venue was confident that Tifelia would win.
However, trying to open the cover and see, their breaths were overwhelmed by the development.
Their curiosity regarding that one girl called Ryua had strengthened even more.

"Se-Seigel-san. Tifelia sure is strong-"

"Of course she is, but it feels like Ryua is on par with her."

Roel's drink containers had accumulated over time, but her drinking stagnated once the match started.
Cynthia was also rooted to her spot, as if praying.

"*Sigh*…If I knew it was going to be like this I would've worn my armor…Your sword there, maybe this will be a tie?"

Ryua had not been truly serious so far.
She has never and will never be able to seriously take out a human.
It's probably something from her childhood; whenever she gets close, she would suddenly stop.
The earlier <Sonic Ripper> was much weaker than when she fought Vanda Lucia.
If it stays like this, then she may not be able to end it. Thinking along those lines, she became a little more serious.

"Tifelia-san."

"Yes?"

“The rest of this fight won’t be like earlier.”

“Ufufufufu, I wonder how many years it’s been since I received such a warning…ufufufu…”

Once again, she licked her lips.
Responding to Ryua’s words, she pointed her sword at Ryua.
Tifelia had a stance saying she would receive whatever Ryua threw at her. Packing power into her feet and kicking the ground, Ryua closed the gap in an instant.

“….Tsu!”

“Here goes!”

It was quite different from the attack Ryua had originally used.
Tifelia didn’t show a surprised expression.
She had waited for this, but she had been careless.

For a very long time, spanning from months into years, Tifelia had not fought anyone that put her life in danger.
From a young age, her father neglected her, and not a single person interacted with her.
Becoming strong was fun for her.
By persevering, she was slowly able to attain the strength she longed for. Merely by seeing a master swordsman use a skill, her ability to imitate bloomed.
After some time, she was called out by a master swordsman living at the Imperial Court. Even he was defeated.
No matter the technique or opponent, nobody could suppress the flame that was Tifelia.
Before realizing it, she had become a <Master Knight>.

—-I wonder when fighting became uninteresting…

Ryua’s <Mithril Sword> clashed with Tifelia’s <Twilight Bringer> while Tifelia was reminiscing about her past.
On contact, the <Mithril Sword> and <Twilight Bringer> broke. The mithril blade spun in the air, making a metallic ringing as it hit the platform.
The colosseum went silent.
Ryua stopped her pursuit and Tifelia merely stood in place while staring at her <Twilight Bringer>.

“For a mere Mithril Sword to break this…absurd.”

She took down her defenseless arms. Ryua, standing before Tifelia, readied her fist and took a stance once again.

“It’s not just sheer strength…Other than this crazy conclusion, everything else is unnecessary. Fufufu…I apologize for not wearing any armor.”

“Even without my weapon, I will still fight.”

Ryua was still raring to fight. Tifelia released her broken blade, letting it drop to the ground.

“Once more, in the future, I want to try and properly fight against you. I give up.”

Tifelia bowed her head.
Ryua’s eyes went wide in shock, stunned by those words.
The referee was flabbergasted and couldn’t make sense of the situation.

“I lost, you know? I give up.”

Once again, Tifelia politely bowed. The entire venue started spitting out questions. Tifelia’s loss was quickly declared, and her fans started making a racket.

“It really is starting to turn noisy. Referee-san, please hurry.”

“A-ah. Is it really fine?”

“You don’t need to confirm it.”

“W-well then, the champion is…Ryua!”

If Tifelia won, high pitched cheers may have been raised.
There was only a sorry amount of applause and a small amount of praises that wrapped the Colosseum.

“*Sigh* I’m exhausted…”

The first one who didn’t understand was Ryua.
This person still wasn’t serious, so she needs to know what her real intentions are.
Like an incomplete combustion, Ryua couldn’t think of any other words but the situation was really like that.

“Why is it like that…the swords only broke.”

“Next time, please bring a proper weapon. I will also wear the armor <The Genuine Article of the Master Knight> and then I will go for it.
Moreover, the two of us must not get serious here…ufufufufu.”

Tifelia teasingly laughed, the feeling from her earlier was totally gone. It was the usual silly woman.
Ryua exerted strength on her shoulder.

“Did you understand that I wasn’t serious?”

“Oh my, I’m being looked down upon. For sure, I didn’t receive your seriousness…fufu.”

She gave a deviating reply. Tifelia was giggling and laughing.
“We can both get serious” it was sure to be like that, Ryua gave a single nod.
If Ryua got serious right now, even the spectator seats would get bisected.

It was like that during the time with Vanda Lucia; if she fought a little bit longer, the caves would start making things dangerous.
Basing on that and even this fight, Ryua may have been unconsciously saving her power.

"Umu, it looks like it ended."

The king stood up from his throne.
He didn't plan to rebuke Tifelia's loss. It was not like the previous years where she sometimes wanted to participate; she came and reported her purpose this time. Just by understanding that, he was satisfied. Certainly, to discover the outstanding talent called Ryua, he was pleased.

"Just as I thought, it was Ryua's win!"

"Y-yeah."

That Tifelia admitted her own loss, Seigel was still unable to believe it.
However, Roel Cynthia and the soldier girl named Ritta sitting beside him didn't mind that fact and were only delighted and celebrating Ryua's victory.
"Hurray, Hurray" the 3 of them were in high spirits, that's why the seniors Seigel and Gantetsu were acting like they didn't know them.

"Well…let's say that I'm not that young anymore."

"Yeah…I've already become an old man."

Before long, the Tougi Taikai had begun it's closing ceremony.
Above the Match Grounds, the speech regarding the long battle of the brave warriors was happening.
The podium was decorated with exaggerated ornaments, and inside the king was laying in wait.

"S-somehow I might be getting nervous."

"Now now, hurry hurry."

Tifelia was half teasing Ryua by pushing her back. Tifelia was aimlessly swaying.
Thinking that, she got dizzy. In the next moment, Tifelia collapsed.

"Eh-"

Turning around, Ryua saw it. Tifelia was sweating profusely and breathing painfully. The Colosseum made a commotion.

"Haa…Haaa…a-u…"

She somehow stood up, and again she felt dizzy and falteringly fell down. Amane and Rupee, whose wounds were healed, supported her and stood her up.

“What’s with this? She has such a terrible fever!”

Amane held her hand to Tifelia’s forehead.
Tifelia’s breathing started to roughen, Rupee applied a status abnormality recovery magic on her, but the situation didn’t change.

“No, thinking about it, there is no meaning in doing it…her status abnormality resistance should’ve been able to resist it.”

——at once, one person from the spectator seats noticed ‘them’.

Pointing his finger to the sky and shouting, what he pointed at was the countless shadows of Pterosaurs.
One of the beast’s wings was abnormally wide, there was something strange looking mixed in.

“Y-your majesty! A swarm of monsters!”

“Don’t panic! Deploy all hands to combat stations! In accordance to the plan, the people on standby, don’t be negligent on taking the spectators to the refuge! Hurry!”

The king’s bodyguard, Kirkton, was giving orders.
In accordance to the plan, a large force of soldiers came in from behind the spectator seats.
Before the chaos intensified, the spectators were to be peacefully guided.
However, screams buried the whole colosseum, running out of time, it didn’t go well.
If it’s like that, then the guiding was useless.
The soldiers were pushed aside and the crowd ran up to the exit.

“Monsters! Monsters! Oi, get out of the way!”

“No way, don’t push!”

“Just was is with that!? What are the Kingdom’s defenses doing!?”

At the center of the chaos, the bowmen soldiers struck back, but they weren’t able to hit the moving targets.
With sharp talons and a large build, it crushed the soldiers, scattering fresh blood.

【A swarm of <Wind Dragon>s appeared! HP: 4339】

【A cluster of <Dragon Blaze> appeared!　HP: 3471】

【A flock of <Red Scissors> appeared!　HP: 1755】

【A herd of <Kaiser Eagle> appeared!　HP: 3210】

Dragon. Insect. Bird.

They were all of different races, but they each possessed wings and a merciless attitude

towards the fleeing prey.
Moreover, among those monsters there are 3 people with their respective shadows.

“The signal looked like it was really late but-”

“Isn’t it fine? Even the Master Knight was sealed and all that was left are the small fries, right? More than that, I’m aching to fight with that rumored Dragon Hunter.”

“Aaa, shut up shut up shut up. I can’t hear my cute bugs’ flapping wings.”

Among the 3, one shadow flew forwards with red scissors, scaring the escaping spectators.

Full Tex Arc 7

Kansutoppu! arc 7 union

Chapter 42 – Union Part 1

"Protect his Majesty while retreating! Don't let your guard falter against the attacks from the sky!"

The soldiers surrounded the King, mimicking the castle walls.
If it wasn't for the A-ranked adventurers around, Amane and the others would have been annihilated a long time ago. The opponents were quite powerful.
If the flying monsters were given a danger level, it would easily surpass 30.

"I don't know who the hell these people are, but they're clearly malicious!"

[Amane used «Souhana Randbu» -Twin Petal War Dance-!]
[Red Scissors received 644 damage!]
[Red Scissors was defeated! HP: 0/1755]

This would be a difficult task to do alone, but by forming a party it seems like they'll manage.
Those who lost during the prelims were doing their best to help, but they were being overwhelmed.

"Benkei and Baste! Don't advance too much! Leave the dragons to that guy!"

"I know. It's reassuring to have the Dragon Hunter here, talk about the right person in the right place. This Baste will work hard to support until the end!"

"He" alone stood against the encroaching dragon army.

[Seigel used «Dragon Buster Blade»!]
[Wind Dragon Army received 2688 damage! HP: 1651/4339]

His blade easily tore through the scales of the giant dragons.
The dragon's death throes rent the air as they collapsed one by one.

"Good grief, what's with these guys? Each and every one of them aren't from around here. Oy, the important looking Mohawk-san, could you explain this?"

Mohawk, who was straddling a wind dragon, smiled as if delighted from Seigel's provocation.
His hairstyle was a mohawk, he wore spunky tights, and in his hand was a thorny whip. He really fit the bill for a pervert.

"Ara~n, I finally received a name from Seigel-chan! You know, for a *very* long time I've

wanted to meet you."

"Unfortunately for you, I avoid escorting men."

"You actually figured out I was a guy?"

"It's because my nose is working."

The clearly obvious male in front of Seigel had a delicate, female-like aura about him.
Even with the lack of information, there was no point in getting agitated at how he acted.
Now, to begin with, who were these people? There were no clues to their identities.

"Are these guys pets? Well, even if they are, that won't stop me."

"Nnn…I wonder about that."

He swung his whip in the air, and suddenly a total of 10 Wind and Blaze dragons attacked Seigel at the same time.

[Seigel used «Charge»! Attack power raised!]
[Seigel quickly used «Burst Braver»!]

An explosion rang out as if signalling the final moments of the dragons, and their lifeless husks fell to the ground.
Attacking so openly without any support, charging and releasing so quickly, this risky method was his way of drawing out Mohawk.

"How half-assed. Can any of your attacks even reach your opponents? I'm tired of these small fries. You can do better can't you…uh…wait, what was your name?"

"You may call me Churchill, the «Dragon Master»."

He started bending his waist back and forth, and Seigel was immediately reminded of Xinbu.
He didn't let his shock show on his face.
"One person with that type of character is enough," but he kept it to himself. Seigel wanted to get more information before riling up his opponent.

"So, a «Dragon Master»? Among monsters, dragons are a superior species. For you to have the skill to raise so many dragons to this level…Where did you learn how to do this? Is this kind of ability even learnable?"

"About that, you see, I'm also a dragon."

"Hoh, you're quite amusing."

"Roel!"

[Ryua attacked! Red Scissors received 3915 damage!]
[Red Scissors was defeated! HP: 0/1755]

Only using her fist, her attack power was naturally weaker than normal.
However, since this was more than enough, she wasn't bothered.
Aiming at the spectator seats, Ryua lanced through the Red Scissors, smashing them to bits.
Ryua was immediately worried about Roel's safety once she realized the situation.
Any monster that hindered her path was instantly crushed by her fist. When she finally reached her important Roel, her heart calmed down.

"Ryua-chan, I'm happy that you're safe…"

"Sorry, I was slow in getting to you…"

"Don't apologize for that. How did things end up like this?"

Ryua did one quick lap around the coliseum, dealing with the monsters in the spectator seats to the best of her fisting ability.
Even so, people were still running about chaotically.
Ritta's figure couldn't be seen amongst the masses, and Nikka was still at the clinic.

"Roel, what about Ritta and the others?"

"Cynthia was able to retreat, she ran away saying she was already gone…Ritta was also gone before I noticed…Ryua-chan, what should we do?"

"Just what the heck is it with these monsters…?"

[A swarm of Red Scissors appeared! HP: 1755]
[A swarm of Blood Flies appeared! HP: 2384]

A large, unified swarm of red insects came to attack the spectators again. Thanks to Ryua, there were miraculously no deaths, but many were still injured.

"BUGGER OFF!"

[Ryua rushed the swarm!]
[The swarm received 17231 damage!]
[The swarm dissipated!]

The swarm left no traces and disappeared. Suddenly, a large insect came up behind her. A shadow could be seen on top.
The shadow had filthy, wavy hair and wore casual clothes totally unbefitting of a battlefield.

"The buzzing feels so good…please get closer, right, right, yes….aaah~….haa~…so good…~"
(9: wtf did i just TL) (ED: wtf did I just edit)

His body was trembling as if in agony. Ryua and Roel took several steps back from him.
On both sides of him there were Red Scissors.
His appearance made the girls feel disgusted.

"W-what's with that…it feels so wrong…"

“Ryua-chan…I’m scared…”

Roel retreated behind Ryua.
From the safety of her new location, Roel poked out half of her body and tried to understand the situation in front of her.
“Honestly, I don’t want to fight this guy,” that thought stayed unspoken inside of Ryua’s mind.
Buzzman slowly opened his eyes and saw the two girls.

“You, you’re the one that’s been slaughtering my bugs. Good grief, an insect not knowing its place is rather unpleasant.”

“Insects, you say? Aren’t they your underlings?”

“Ha! That is what makes you an insect! In this world, surpassing all life forms are bugs! You’ll never understand the greatness of these bugs and…aa~…this buzzing is so good…”

While in the middle of talking, his body shivered again from the buzzing.
“Ew” escaped Ryua’s lips, exposing her feelings from looking at this man.
Buzzman laughed scornfully at her.

“Well then, I should erase this woman who is lower than an insect. No reason to hesitate, go!”

Signalling with both his hands at the same time, Red Scissors along with other large insects faced Ryua and Roel.
Before long, dozens of bugs attacked at once.

Ryua was furious. She had become the champion, and then for no reason and completely unannounced, these unknown bastards spoiled everything.
Worst of all, unrelated and innocent people were dragged into it.
Just like her village…why…

–You are an insect.

Buzzman’s miscalculation was Ryua.
Even without her sword, she could easily end his life.
By no means was she a small fry, rather she was the sole lion.
Because he is Buzzman, he should have understood her ability for sure.
The bloodlust she emitted was so strong that even the bugs could feel it.
Those bugs just became stagnant, ignoring Buzzman’s orders.

“…Oi, do it already. What happened?”

Regardless of whether they fought or ran, they knew the outcome was the same.
“My life is precious” was their only thought.
Ryua was scowling at Buzzman while clenching her fist.

“Just who are you guys?”

“I am «Insect Master», Vit. Yes, we are…”

As if he was at a concert, the man straddling the mysterious bird shouted with a voice loud enough to reach across the whole coliseum.

“I guess it’s time to introduce ourselves! We are the Reborn Demon Lord army! I am one of the 12 generals! «Bird Master» Barts! As of today, this country is terminated!”

“De-Demon Lord…army..!?”

Gantetsu’s face did a complete change.
Even though he was in the middle of combat, his hand was shaking and trembling. His axe was no longer up, and he left himself open.
Amane was able to cover him, but Gantetsu didn’t even notice.

“Demonlord Army…as if such a thing is even real!”

“I agree with you, but right now, do you want to die!?”

Amane’s rebuke didn’t reach him, and the cold sweat running down his face increased even more.
There were more people than just Gantetsu in shock over that declaration. “I can’t believe this” was matched with surprised expressions plastered on their faces.
Bart was enjoying the reactions, he was watching with amusement.

“I’m sure you’re all surprised, but I don’t have any reason to explain the details, ok? I just wanted to announce that we have come back, no more and no less!”

He wore tea-colored full body tights, with feathers on his back.
His fashion sense was out of place for the battlefield, but nobody said anything.
Ryua was especially bothered by Vit’s attitude, and she decided to take the attitude of “Who cares anymore?”
Even with that mindset, she still had the manners to announce her attack, but no more than that.

“…Here I come.”

“Ho-ho-hou, that’s some great vigor. But you can’t defeat me, as to why-”

[Ryua attacked! Vit received 4821 damage! HP: 4512/9333]

When Ryua jumped onto the bug Vit had occupied, she dealt him a blow to his stomach.
He opened his mouth to the point where it seemed his jaw would come off, and he raised his voice into something you couldn’t call a scream.
He fell off his bug and onto the ground.

“A…agaa-….d-dying…I’m dying…”

Vit was squirming on the ground, face up.
Reacting to its master being in a pinch, the bug tried to shake off Ryua and flew about.

“Shut up.”

It received a strike, piercing its body. Then, all it could see was the sky as it fell down next to Ryua.

[Feather Mantis was defeated! HP: 0/5967]

The huge prey mantis that grew wings fell aside the squirming Vit.
Overcome by disgrace and fear, Vit showed his seriously hardened determination as the Girl was looking down on him.

“Do-do you think that you’ve won? Look properly, at the true form of Vit of the 12 Demon Generals…!”

From Vit’s back grew bug-like wings, around the same size as the Feather Mantis’.
On his hands and feet grew a carapace, but it looked more like he was equipping it.
Head, body, hands, feet. Each part had the feature of an insect, making him look like a legitimate monster. Every trace of Vit’s humanity was gone.

–A human has become a monster.

Ryua caught those words from who knows where, but, she immediately didn’t care.

[«The Buzzing Hunter», Vit, appeared! HP: 15300]

“Do you think that I am ugly? Do you think that I’m a monster? It’s come to my understanding that there are those that love this.”

“What are you talking about? You’re just a monster, you know?”

“‘Just a monster’…well, that’s not wrong!”

[«The Buzzing Hunter», Vit, used «Vital Slash -Taisetsuki-»]
[Ryua didn’t receive any damage!]

A human wearing armor would have been sliced like ham.
Ryua took it with her palm.
As if it was a rubber knife, the blade was pressed into Ryua’s hand.

“Wh…what the hell…”

“It’s my turn next, right?”

The blade in his hand broke, and the hilt was swatted away with one hand. A fist rushed into

his body, shattering it and leaving no trace.

[Ryua attacked! «The Buzzing Hunter», Vit, received 14266 damage! HP: 1034/15300]

“Geeee!”

Vit was still alive with only his head remaining.
Vit had always boasted “Among the 12 Demon Generals, my vitality is superior!”, but now he regretted having that ability.

“F-for me to be done in by such a kid! Impossible! Just what the hell are you!?”

“Y-you’re still alive…”

Vit was talking with only his head, causing Ryua to take a step back.
She hadn’t held back with her punch this time, unlike before when he was in his human form.
If Ryua had known what Vit really was, he probably would have ended up in worse shape.
For Ryua, Vit becoming a monster was lucky.

“Gigi…damn it…don’t think that this is the end…!”

His head flew forward and stuck to the back of a little girl trying to run away from the spectator seats. It may have been the most disgusting feeling in the girl’s short life; she let out a scream with all her might.

“Kuha! That’s too bad…if you think this kid’s life is precious, yo-”

This time, the head blew apart.
Vit severely underestimated Ryua’s speed. She rushed forward and blew him away with a single slap.

[«The Buzzing Hunter», Vit, was defeated! HP: 0/15300]

“Are you alright? Where is your mother?”

“Fueee…Mamaa…”

Ryua spoke to the crying girl.
With Ryua’s lack of social skills, the way ahead was dark.
However, Roel rushed over and they were able to have her take refuge.

“That child, I wonder if she’ll be fine.”

“Since the soldier was leading her, it should be fine, probably…”

The kingdom may have dealt with the situation properly, with most of the people in the Colosseum already gone, but you can see the corpses here and there of the people who didn’t make it out. Ones who only have their upper body left, those who were burned so bad that they can no longer be identified. It’s hard to find anyone with a body still intact.

“Damn, damn damn! Just what the hell are you guuuuuuuuuuyyyys!!”

“Ryu-Ryua-chan…!”

The skies are still occupied by the monster army, and she shouted to the master of the mysterious bird.
Barts may have noticed this, an exalted smile floated.

“If you’re talking to me, call me Birdman! Get it? I’m a Bird man you know? Hahahahahahaha!”

“Shut uuuuuuuuuuup!”

Ryua jumped towards the sky.

When the monster army attacked, Ritta immediately went below to her brother.
Even if it’s an off-day, it’s her duty to guide each person trying to escape, but she abandoned that.
With her breath already faint, she sprinted through the corridor.

“O-onii-chan…”

“Oops, there’s such a cute girl in this place.”

Just before reaching the clinic where Nikka was, a middle-aged man wearing a hat with an unshaven face, stood in her way.
The man smiled nihilistically and, with a wave of his hand, released a boar monster 3 times his size.

[Great Boar appeared! HP: 933]

“Well, you see this is a secret mission. I don’t know what you’re in such a hurry for, but I’ll have you die here.”

“P-please don’t get in the way…”

Ritta grasped her spear tightly, she prepared to intercept the heavily breathing monster boar.

“Reborn Demon Lord army, one of the 12 demon generals. «Beast Master» Pansardo.
Since you are going to die, you should at least name yourself.”

“C-«Castle Soldier» Ritta.”

That voice was very feeble and frail.

Chapter 43 – Union Part 2

I jumped towards the guy in tights who was on his bird.
As expected, he was shocked. Even so, he leisurely rotated to evade my attack.

"That was…surprising. Just what kind of body do you have? Enjoy your landing, by the way."

"I have defeated one of your comrades! Next will be youuuuu…"

I'm pretty sure he heard those last words of mine, though my voice must have gotten quite quiet as I fell.
Though, Barts was right, I had to land.
In front of me, I saw Seigel being trampled by what looked like a human mixed with a dragon.
His armor was in tatters and a large amount of fresh blood flowed onto the ground. He might die like this.

"You, what did you just say? Who's next? I can't see Vit-chan's figure anymore, now that you mention it…."

"I defeated him! Remove your feet from that guy right now!"

The one in the sky, Barts, and the half-dragon man had tight expressions on their faces as they looked around.
After confirming the lack of that nasty bug guy, they both attacked in a rage.

"That's a lie! For Vit-chan do be done in by someone like you!"

"Seriously!? Did you kill Vit? Impossible, he must have been careless, no doubt about it! There's no other way!"

The half-dragon and Barts encircled me, trying to cut off my escape route.
Too bad for them, I don't plan on escaping.
I noticed the half-dragon's face had tears pouring down his scaly face.

"Sorry, Vit-chan…This Churchill kept being careless, so just wait a bit. I'll crush this impudent brat right now!"

He went from half-covered to fully covered by scales; it seems this is closer to his true nature.
He grew the wings of a dragon, and his body doubled, almost tripled in size.
Taking up almost a third of the colosseum, the soldiers and A-ranked adventurers dodged his talons in a hurry.

"W-what is that!? Where in the world did that dragon come from!?"

A soldier was shouting out, not aware of the circumstances.
Though to survive so far, he's pretty amazing.
It seems that captain, Kirkton, was a good leader.
The King had already been hidden away, and it seems Kirkton was commanding his unit.

“Oi, Churchill! Don’t rage around in that form! Don’t get me caught up in your attacks!”

“It’s too late; I have decided to destroy her. Besides, with your flexible body you can avoid this pretty easily, right?”

His way of speaking hadn’t changed much, even after turning into this dragon.
Churchill…no, Churchill-dragon’s black scales were glittering, and his tail was large enough to blow away most of the surrounding people in a single swing.
He was much more powerful than Vit, but other than that, I didn’t get much of a feeling from him.

“Ufufufufu, even among the 12 demon generals, I am considered pretty accommodating and benevolent. Making me get serious is an atrocity, so I’ll have this country purged as payment, okay~?”

“Oi, Ryua…use this.”

While on the verge of death, Seigel passed his sword to me.
He needs to be treated quickly or he’ll die…
However, I can’t use my recovery magic for this, I’ll have to find someone else… but for now, I need to get rid of this dragon.
I took the sword from Seigel’s hand.

“It’s a sword with the innate ability to slay dragons. I dealt some grazing wounds on that homosexual bastard, but that’s with the strongest swings I could muster…the results depend on the wielder. If it’s you, it’ll definitely be done…”

This greatsword I received from Seigel will take this dragon down.
As I turned to the dragon, he craned his long neck and sneered down at us.

“Oh my~ what’s this? Perhaps you got Seigel-chan’s weapon? No, no, no! What audacity!”

[«Black Steel Dragon Churchill» appeared! HP: 28200]

“Your comrade died, and you lot are indifferent about it, not even mourning. Instead, you kill more people.”

“Oh my, I wonder who you’re talking about? Clearly you don’t know anything…”

Churchill sighed and then took in a large, deep breath. It seems he doesn’t want to explain anything.
It seems he’s going to do a breath attack, so the people around here are in danger.
Opponents like this always do it this way.
Just like when I charged Barts, I jumped at Churchill and trampled his head.
He couldn’t release the breath and it exploded in his mouth instead.

[«Black Steel Dragon Churchill» received 412 damage! HP: 27788/28200]

“Nn, nnnn, fuuuuu…”

A small flame flickered out of the nose of the miserable dragon, who was clearly in agony.
Nonetheless , if it only took damage from its own breath, it couldn’t have been that bad.
Yeah, this sword is the only thing that can deal a fatal injury.

“YEW FREAKWING TWEEEEEEEERP!!”

The dragon released a breath attack towards me while I was still in the air.
Something started coming out near his mouth and it released a scorching hot blaze.
If this had been released into the colosseum and not into the air, many people would have been sacrificed.
Though with the immense heat this is giving off, it probably would have melted the nearby houses.
The dragon glared at me taking the attack head-on, thinking I was burnt to a crisp.
He seemed relieved; he lowered his head and aimed at the people running around.

“I’m still here you know?”

“W-what!? Why!?”

Hearing my voice, he once again raised his head but it was too late. I brought Seigel’s blade down with me as I fell from the sky, cutting the dragon into 2 instantly.

[«Black Steel Dragon Churchill» received 347332 damage!]
[«Black Steel Dragon Churchill» was defeated! HP: 0/28200]

“No…way…”

He managed to get those words out even while being slashed into 2 pieces.
I immediately notice things were about to get dire.
If I did nothing, those two large chunks of his body would fall and result in casualties.
This is bad. In a panic, I threw my fire magic at the corpse and turned it into little cinders.
Magic isn’t my strong point, but if it’s just a dragon corpse, I can easily make it into ashes.

“Hehe…Ryua, good job.”

Seigel managed to get those words out, even on the verge of death.
Barts was shaking and trembling as he watched this all unfold.

“Impossible…Churchill is superior even within the 12 demon generals…I heard nothing about a kid like this being here! What was that «Necromancer» bastard even investigating!? Did he just mess around during the tournament?”

“The bug and dragon are gone, you’re next.”

“Damn! What about the others?”

Barts looked around the colosseum to find the others.
The monster count had dropped considerably, and since the death of the dragon and bug bosses, the smaller ones were less ferocious. The A-rankers had dealt with them pretty quickly it seems.
There were, unfortunately, many fallen soldiers.
In a small, hidden away area, many were receiving treatment, but it may have been too late for many of them since there were many people covered in cloth.
Once again, emotions surged up inside me.
The bird guy seems to think he got away, he laughed out loud and had his birds attack the ground.

"Looks like it ends here! Since it has come to this, I'll chip off as much of the kingdom's fighting potential as I can. I'll let you take care of the aftermath ok? Hahahahahahahahaha!"

He flew away, leaving behind his bird underlings.

–who said you could escape?

I ran to the highest wall in the Colosseum by the spectator seats and jumped with all my strength. Barts thought he got away on his mysterious bird, but I landed on it. Unable to hide his surprise, he let out a weak groan.

"A-are you a monster, brat…?"

"The monsters are you guys."

"T-that's right, I thought of something good! Why not enter the Reborn Demon Army? You probably don't know anything or why we're doing this, I know you'll change your mind if you learn the truth!"

"The people who died won't return!"

"You really won't join us…?"

"Nay!"

"I don't care about that" is my decision, and in the next instant, Barts' tights were torn through with feathers bursting out. It was not like the fake feather on the tights, but actual, genuine feathers.
Barts became a Birdman. From atop the mysterious creature he was on, he flew up with his wings into the sky, leaving it behind.

"Thinking about it, a person who can't fly won't win an aerial battle, riiiiiiiiight?"

[«The Bird King Of The Sky Barts» appeared! HP: 17900]

[«Demon Garuda» appeared! HP: 5700]

"«Demon Garuda»! First things first, shake off that brat!"

The «Demon Garuda» that I was on started to act violently.
Shaking, turning, and spinning to try and make me fall.
I held tight to the fur obstinately. Barts, who was watching me while feeling full of supremacy, sneered.

"You may be strong, but this is the sky!
You can't fly! If you fall, you die!
It feels good to fly in the sky, right?
It's what every child yearns for!
If you get lost in the mountains and see the birds floating freely in the sky, you will always think 'If only I could fly…'"

Certainly, if this goes on, I won't be able to get that guy. More than that, I'll be shaken off.
It's a thrill that I didn't experience at the «Caves of Hell» and something that I haven't digested yet.
This guy is laughing wildly, thinking he's won.
I can't think of him as the guy earlier who was leaking out miserable voices.

"Awawawaa! F-falling falling! Waa!"

"I, Barts, own the sky! It's fine to call me Bird Man you know! Call me! Hahahahahahahaha!"

If this guy would fight fairly, he would be nothing.
There isn't much difference between him and that bug guy from earlier.
Yeah, I don't plan to admit to losing.

"Now then, I don't plan to go easy on you! Eat this!"

[«The Bird King Of The Sky Barts» released «Mega Sonic Wave»!]

I, who can only just cling onto the «Demon Garuda», have no way of evading it. Nay, it's not that there is no way. It's…somehow it's making me want to challenge it and let it hit.

[Ryua received 86 damage! HP: 40936/41022]

"Ow…that was dangerous. The hand-me-downs from Roel nearly got torn up…"

It was really dangerous. There was a thin line of blood flowing from the wound.
Let's have Roel heal it later.
Barts trembled as he saw me only getting worried about the scratch and the clothes.
Was he really serious about not going easy on me?

"E-even an A rank would be cut into pieces if they took that directly…Me-«Mega Sonic Wave» was…
It shouldn't be like this…the Avangard Kingdom should have been finished today…

Even though we went through great pains to seal the «Master Knight», this is…”

“If you still don’t plan to give up, then it’s my turn!”

“Like hell it is! In this sky, what can you do!?”

I grip my sword while concentrating.
Then, when I thought “There!” I swing the sword with one hand.

[Ryua fired «Sonic Ripper»!]
[«The Bird King Of The Sky Barts» received 359913 damage!
[«The Bird King Of The Sky Barts» was defeated! HP: 0/17900]

It looks like he tried to avoid the attack hitting his vitals, but it still caused a fatal wound.
Looks like that was enough.
His wings stopped flapping and the birdman started falling to the ground.

“Our…dearest wish…is…”

He should’ve fallen towards the colosseum.
It would be bad if he landed on someone.
I look down——

The mysterious bird raised a strange cry and once again started to get violent.
Even if the master is gone, it still abides by its order to shake me off.
Distracted by Barts, who had fallen, I was easily thrown off.

“Waaaaaaaaaa! Wa-wa-wa-wa-what should I do!?…That’s right!”

Seeing the ground approaching, I faced downwards and fired magic with all my might.
Making sure it doesn’t reach the ground; otherwise, I’ll cause some damage.

[«Lightning Bolt»]!

As I expected, just before I crashed into the ground, the recoil of the magic made my body gently float.
My rate of acceleration should have decreased, and I should have started falling slower.

“Ok…”

I was able to land skillfully.
But, I didn’t have any spare time to be relieved.
To the side was Barts, who should’ve split into 2, still moving.
I approached him as he spoke in a frail voice.

“Help…me please…let me go…”

His form was exactly that of a human bird. Half of his body returned to its human form.
It was not a direct hit, but the majority of the strike should’ve hit him.

I wonder how he is still alive. What amazing vitality.

"Please…help…me…"

I wonder if it's better if I don't finish him off.
In my head, I understand, but my hands won't move.
I just stare at him silently.

"I…promise…I won't…do…anything…like…this anymore."

I understand that this bug is saying something good.
But, I can't.
No matter what I do, I can't kill this guy.

–Is it because he turned back into a human?
–Is it because I'm naive?

The answer came out.
But, I still can't do anything.
My hands start to tremble.

"I beg of you…"

Hearing the voice that is about to vanish, I unconsciously let him drink a recovery potion.
I even let go of the sword I was holding.

"T-thank…you…"

"You promise that won't do anything like this anymore, right?"

"You are…kind…strong…and naive…"

He can flap his wings now, but he didn't seem like he would.
To the point that I can't think of him as the guy who wanted to kill me. I can't feel anything from him.

"Maybe if it is you, you can-…"

Barts' throat was slashed and a fountain of blood gushed out.
In a state where he couldn't even scream, Barts' life ended.
Out of nowhere, something pink came to the surface and molded into a form of a man, it formed into the shape of Xinbu.

"Then, with this, most of the bosses are dead. Nicely done, nicely done."

He pointed down at me, and his other hand was fluttering.
Before I noticed, it was too late.
Although it may just be that I didn't have the heart to help Barts.
This is the same as the time when I couldn't save Grundom.

No, I didn't help him.
Just as I thought, that was right.
Although I helped him, inside me, I couldn't forgive Barts.
The point is only up until there, but somehow, it's unbearable.
As I thought, the reason was that I hate this guy.

"N, what's wrong-ssho, dazing around.
My? This guy, there is a recovery potion in his mouth-ssho.
I didn't see any guys carrying this around but…let me see now?"

He was forcefully flickering his eyes towards me, while giving a pretense that I don't understand.

"What do you want…?"

"Well, let's ignore that-ssho. More than that, I will be ending this soon, so can you move back for a bit-ssho."

"End it? You?"

He was smiling at me as if mocking me.
But I ignored Xinbu and looked around.

"It was mostly the feat of the A ranks…The kingdom soldiers are hopeless-ssho.
Half of them didn't put up a good fight and are either dead or injured.
So this is what they call 'protecting the country'-ssho."

He pointed both of his fingers underhandedly towards the sides and moved them together.
From Xinbu's body, another Xinbu came out.
And another and another.

"[«Hundred Clones» -Hyaku Bunshin-]"

Xinbu, who multiplied by 1 hundred, chased the remaining monsters inside the colosseum and attacked them all at once.
It's not that it's an eerie scene for someone to split into a hundred, but it's more like it's because it was Xinbu that it makes you want to close your eyes.

But that activity is something that I can't make fun of.

TL: Pansardo -> Panthard

Chapter 44 Union part 3

«Hundred Clones» -Hyaku Bunshin-

The 10 Xinbus instantly mince every large dragon and birds into lumps of meat
Compared to the time it took the A rank parties to fight them, it was many more times more efficient. In quick succession, the monsters inside the Colosseum were defeated.
Seigel, who received treatment, was somehow able to stand next to me and watch the scene in awe.

"Isn't it amazing? This is one of the Top Five A ranks."

"Top Five?"

"The leading 1st to 5th A rankers are called that.
There are small changes in the orders, but from the 1st to the 5th, they don't really change.
Below that their difference is like heaven and earth."

"Hee~――"

"Even though I'm saying that, you've already defeated the 3 leaders…
I can't really get this across because of it. Really…what a feat.
You'll probably directly summoned by the King afterwards."

"Ah, that's right! Roel!"

I'm not in the situation to leisurely chat with Seigel.

Thanks to Xinbu, there wasn't any more damage, but I'm still worried about Roel.
Since you said "Top Five", the thought, '*Where are the other 4 right now?*' came up, but I couldn't care less right now.

/ / /

"Mogamoga! Moga!"(TL: sounds of mouth being blocked) (ED: Really??? Sure……..)

While Ryua was fighting in the skies, Roel was kidnapped behind the scenes, her hands bound behind her back.
Slowly, Roel lost her consciousness for no apparent reason.
Her body lost strength as she was put to sleep; Inoro gazed over her figure.

"Really~ those 3 getting done in… even that is something I hadn't predicted.
The Beastmaster is here, however. I wonder what he is doing. Somewhere――
Oh well, at this rate, even he won't win against that monster girl. If that's that case――"

He turned his gaze to Roel, whom he had put to sleep.
In his hand, he was grasping a sharp knife.

"Ah~ , I want to touch her directly…….but I won't forgive it.
If so, then this is much more–"

"What the hell do you think you are doing!"

By the time the shout had reached Inoro, the knife he was holding was kicked away.
The knife flew far away, and the girl who just appeared didn't seem like she'd forgive anyone who'd pick it up.
Her speed was so fast, he hadn't even noticed when she approached him. (ED: She shoulda just punched him in the balls…) (ED 2: does he even have balls? We're talking about a demon right?)

That girl, Ryua, has come.

/ / /

"…..wasn't that really fast….."

"I trained after all."

For some reason, Roel had fainted, so I stood in Inoro's way to protect her.
Inoro backed off vigilantly, weary of me.
Stroking the hand that I had kicked, he looked mortified.

"Just now, you went easy on me, right?…

…even though you could've scattered it away if you felt like it…"

"If you promise to never lay a hand on Roel again, then there will be nothing more than that."

Did he just see through my real ability, or was it from the fight earlier? I don't really get it.
This guy just now…clearly told me that I went easy. As if he could see through the depths of my heart, Inoro composedly took a step towards me.

"I fell in love with that child. Please give her to me." (ED: Wow. That on the spot BS excuse. He has no shame.)

"Don't mess with me!"

"Am I hated by that girl? What is that girl to you anyway?"

"Says the person who put her to sleep.If you take one more step, I won't show you mercy!"

"You won't be able to kill me.Didn't you hesitate before and stop when dealing with Barts? You probably won't be able to kill a human.On the other hand, you won't hesitate when it comes to Vit or Churchill who are not in human form.Am I wrong?"

I kept silent. Was this guy watching the entire time?How was he unaffected watching his comrades get done in?The 3 that I defeated had, at least, thought of their comrades.But this guy is somehow different.Cold eyes and ashen skin.He wore a robe, as if trying to hide those traits.Is this guy possibly also one of the 12 Demon Generals?

Now that I think about it, this guy was also the one who had spread his blood on Tifelia.And

because of that, Tifelia collapsed.Just what in the world is this guy…

“Hey, Hey, I’m approaching you; is that fine?”

Inoro drew near me rudely.It sent me shivers. I held Roel and drew back.Just now, the guy stopped walking.

“…..You sure have good instincts. Was it possibly exposed?”

“What was?”

“The kick earlier: it was good that you had your shoes on.”

“Then what is it?!”

“Relax~that girl is all right.”

I got irritated because I couldn’t understand what they meant, but I knew that I shouldn’t ignore that guyIf I look closely, I can see he’s still a kid.It’s hard to tell because of his sinister robe, but he is shorter than I am.If that is the case, he might even be younger than I am. (ED 2: never judge a book by its cover ryua.)

“Well then, maybe I should make my move soon.”

Saying that, Inoro drew out both of his hands and began chanting some spell.By the time I thought I should stop him, it was already done.

“Those of the fallen who still have the will,once more, I call you to rise from the depths of hell!”

As if a shadow world had encroached on the earth, the skies went dark. (ED: Inoro wants to duel in the Shadow Realm. Do you accept? {Y/N})(9: *presses Y*)

Then, inside the colosseum, a corpse twitched and began moving.First bugs, then dragons, then birds, then humans.The soldiers who were covered in cloths stood on their feet again.The dragons once again rose and flapped their wings.The bugs staggered around as they started to move.Ignoring to the blood still flowing from their wounds, they, the dead, started coming back to life.A soldier who was treating the wounded panicked.

“T-the co-co-corpses….revived…..”

The blades on the zombie’s waist was suddenly swung down on his former comrade.The soldier, being suddenly pierced tried resisting, but before long had fallen to the ground, lifeless. One by one the corpse started to rise again, and standing before them, Inoro chuckled.

【Dragon Zombie appeared! HP 3500】

【Scissor Dead appeared! HP 1300】

【Living Hawk appeared! HP 1650】(9: Yeah, it's "Living" Hawk, maji de?!?) (ED: The Living Dead…)

I felt that they were slower than they were when they were alive.However, a moving, attacking corpse was already enough as a force.Even if you skewer them, they won't even feel it. No matter where you hit 'em, the monster will keep moving forward, not even faltering for a step. Well, it's not the time be absent-minded–I have to do something immediately.But even after saying that, I can't just leaving Roel in this place.

"U~n, Ryua-chan…..gewdmorning….eh?" (ED: did anyone else read lewdmorning the first time?)

When she grasped the situation, she released a small "kya" while I was holding her. We headed towards the place in the Colosseum where the zombies were gathering in order to exterminated them.

"I-it's impossible~! No matter what we do, we can't! Uwaaaaaaaaa!"

I saved a soldier who was on the verge of being smashed by a dragon's foot.I slashed off the foot, causing the dragon to squirm around, not even being able to walk. At this place, I put Roel down, but since she had no idea what to do, she stuck close to me. (ED 2: Ryua you have some of the worst safety assessment ever. You save her then leave her right in the middle of a fight)

"Youuuuuuu!" (ED 2: Ryua super sayian mode or not yet)
【Ryua Attacked! Dragon Zombie received 331983!】
【Dragon Zombie was defeated! HP 0/3500】

After finely chopping it to pieces, I burned it to ashes.Since the enemy is a corpse, I didn't have any other ideas on dealing with them.Inoro was relaxing in the spectator seats while looking over the disaster.

"Kukukuku! It sure is amazing……..if it's like this, then the 12 Demon Generals are ruined.

But with this number of zombies, you should pick up the pace, or else more victims will emerge."

"Inoro! It won't end with just an injury, you know!"

"Inoro? Aaah, that was my assumed name, wasn't it? There wasn't much too meaning to it–that's right. I am [Necromancer] Juo, a 12 Demon General of the Revived demonlord army.By the way, how is Tifelia doing?"

"Huh?" My mind quickly turned to Tifelia.The living soldiers had made a protecting wall between the dead soldiers and the seriously wounded people who are laying on the ground. Among the injured are audience members. Tifelia is also bedridden. I can't see properly from here, but I can tell that she's in a lot of pain.

“Ryua-chan, I’ll look over Tifelia-san!”

Roel jogged towards where Tifelia-san is.

While watching her go, Juo laughed, as if he was enjoying the scene from the bottom of his heart.

“Ahahahahahahaha, it looks like it’s going well. I was prepared when I arrived here, but I never thought for it to happen so quickly in the tournament.For the lowest possible thing to happen was right on the money.” (ED: This guys laughs annoy me.)

“What the hell did you do to Tifelia!”

“This is the end for her, you know. After all, my blood which was shed on her contains an incurable disease.What [Master Knight]. It was so disappointing.”

Tifelia had forgot to stay vigilant. She said so when she was fighting with me: that it had already been so long that she had an opponent she had to be cautious against.That’s why she ended up like this now. She is strong–no, that’s not just all.Amane-san and everyone else: they put great effort just to become strong.I understood it in this tournament.That’s why, this guy has no right to laugh over it.

I gathered a lot of power in my sword hand–

“Someone like you–!”

【Ryua fired Sonic Ripper!】

The slash that I release soared towards Juo, and the black robe was torn to pieces.The body was horizontally split in 2, and he collapsed where he sat.Killed. I killed him. I put too much force in it. Coming back to my senses, I run towards where Juo was, but at that place was just a black robe and completely unknown corpse. Avangard kingdom’s armor……this guy is a soldier.A soldier dressed in the black robe lay in 2 pieces on the ground.Did I mistake my opponent?!?That should be–It’s a lie———I killed a person?!?!?!?!?

“Ahahaha! To be caught so easily with this move! I sincerely apologize for not having an earnest match with you. If possible, I would really like to have Roel, but with you, stealing her somehow seems hard to accomplish. Whenever a chance presents itself once again, I will get her next time. See ya!”

Juo was at the diagonal of the spectator seats.With the black robe removed, tattooed on his ashen body was a crawling, black, worm-like pattern.

“Bye-Bye,” he said while waving his hand at me with a childish appearance.

“Ah right, right. The one you cut up just now was already a corpse.I was manipulating it, OK? So don’t worry about it! Haha.”

And then he vanished.In that instant, the dark clouds started to brighten up.The zombies still left inside the Colosseum appeared to be in immense pain, but still didn't abandon their will to attack.

"They are pitiful, but…….tooryah!"

Gantetsu brought down his axe towards the soldiers–rather, to that thing which was once a soldier.Beinkei and Baste, the A ranks, without any hesitation, eliminated the zombies in every direction.Looking at that spectacle, I felt like running away. I turned my sight away and went towards Roel.

"Roel, how is Tifelia?"

"She has a really terrible fever…….I said that I know about it, but I can't do anything."

"We tried the best of our skills, but…….we understand one thing: this is a disease with a viral nature. Right now that is all that we know about it."

The medics were holding their heads in their hands.It seemed that every measure from their scope of magic and medicinal knowledge had completely no effect at all. (ED: All the king's horses and all the king's men…)

Before long, all the monsters inside the Colosseum were dealt with; the injured were brought in one after the other.

"It hurtsss….it hurts…please……kill me please…..I beg of you…"

It was so much that I couldn't keep looking. Their entire bodies were burned; no matter how you look at it, they couldn't be saved.Some among them even groaned for death. I can't do anything for them.I wonder why can't I use recovery magic?Before me, the medics and Roel were working desperately to treat the injured, and I can't even do anything.The experience I had in the Caves of Hell doesn't have any use.The more I think about it, the more tears seem to overflow.

"Don't think too much about it. It's because of your actions we were saved.It's better if there are more living."

Gantetsu-san put over his hand on my shoulder as he encourages me.Seigel, who was at death's door, was healed by recovery magic and had his body wrapped in bandages.He groaned "owowow" while trying to stand up, and then headed towards me.

"It sure was a struggle.I hadn't really thought that I would be saved a second time.Can't you just get saved occasionally by this great Seigel!"

"But still, a lot of people died…"

"After something like this, you will have a lot of thoughts and regrets, right?

It's fine to stop for a moment, but to stop moving forward is not good.Keep on moving forward without fail." (ED: Good life advice.)

Gantetsu only said those words and nothing else.

"Oo~~~i! So you guys were safe~?!"

From far away, Cynthia was waving her hands while running towards us.*So she was safe*. Relieved, I approached her.Running out of breath, Cynthia seems to have already absorbed the situation. She doesn't really look that surprised.

"Aaa, just as I thought, Ryua-chin was alright. And above all, Roelun too…."

"You too Cynthia-san. You sure did well staying safe…….though, I'm surprised about that."

"Yeah, after all, it's because those people came.Thanks to them, the monsters that were rampaging around the castle town were thoroughly swept clean, you know!"

"Those people? The ones other than us–"

"T-they are?! Did they come back already?!"

Right behind Cynthia, a number of people can be seen walking towards us.Gantetsu was awestruck by the people that were quietly looking at this place.

///

Turning back time a little—

The spear which was used as a weapon is now being used in a place of a walking stick.Even though her whole body was already screaming in pain, Ritta wasn't able to run away from the ferocious wild boar.The Beastmaster Panthard was boredly observing her situation.
This great boar isn't that much of a strong monster.And despite this, just what the heck is with this country's soldiers?!? To think that they are this meager….
His face indicated it as he approached the girl.

"You sure are miserable. Aren't you a soldier of this country?And yet you can't even do anything against this monster. Aren't you ashamed?"

As Panthard said this, Ritta received a body blow.At last, her hand had let go of her spear and she fell on her knees while clutching her stomach.

"Uuu……ough……."

"Have you ever once thought that shedding tears was mortifying?But, I can see that this country has a very serious problem of lacking capable people. If it's like this, then that child at the Avangard Cave is much more of a person to look out for.A girl with blue, short-cut hair and a bit boyish–"

The hand that was about to pick the spear that had fallen over faltered.Ritta has already lost her will to fight. Returning that spear to her grip didn't mean she was going to fight.
It's impossible. Scary. Help me.
Ritta was overcome by fear and disgrace. As if adding onto her shame, Panthard's next words came out.

"About this time, there should about three–no, four of them there.Avangard kingdom–which has no means against us, the revived demonlord army–will be destroyed."

"You people……why are you doing such things……"

"Nnn, I wonder. If I had to say it…….because it's irritating?"

"What is with……that……"

Having the same line of sight as Ritta, Panthard, who was crouching, stood up and started patting the great boar.

"Right now, you are going to your death. What would you gain from my explanation? Though, at least if you have defeated this one and stab me once,I would've been glad to say a few words."

The Great Boar was still breathing from its nose roughly as if really unsatisfied.If Panthard hadn't had it wait, without a doubt, Ritta would've been killed.He was manipulating such a ferocious monster as if it were his own limbs.
"Beast Master", that is his class.However, he was different from those 3 outside rampaging:he can summon a monster at will.With that fact, it showed how different they are from him.

"*cough* *cough*…….*vomit*…" (ED: Sorry, no sound effects.)

Ritta vomited blood, and the pain increased to her whole body. Not being able to bear it, she couldn't even get on her knees from the place where she lay.

"Do you not want to die? Then, try begging for your life a bit."

"He-help……"

"More. A larger voice."

"Help….p."

"Your voice is too low!"

Panthard wanted to kick the fallen Ritta.Suddenly however, he sensed danger and moved away from that place.Having instantly avoided a spear of meteor, Panthard turned towards the direction the spear came from, and confirmed who threw it.

"Get away from Ritta. The next one will seriously hit."

“Ha! Nicely said. That just now was serious, wasn’t it?”

Panthard joked back. He turned and faced toward Nikka, who was covered all over with bandages, with a rugged expression.Anyone would know from his appearance that he had not yet recovered from the injuries he got during the fight with Hekaton.

“An injured person appeared to save another injured person! You, what is this girl to you? A lover?”

“A sister; if you lay a hand on her, I will kill you”

“Fuun, so a sister. A set of siblings, what a surprise……”

“Kukukukuku,” Panthard leaked a small laugh.At the snap of his fingers, the great boar rushed towards Nikka.The spear’s thrust became like a meteor, going straight ahead. It clashed with the wild boar face to face.Without slowing down, it went through the wild boar.

【Nikka used -flowing spear thrust-!】
【Great Boar received 951 damaged!】
【Great Boar was defeated! HP 0/933】

“It’s as if its training is not enough. And then it was also not that disciplined.” (ED: I think he is talking about the boar.)

“Sorry. You are feeling so great right now, but just now, that wasn’t even a trial.”

“So have you already thought of your next excuse?”

Panthard, taking Nikka’s provocation, took off the cap he was wearing. Once again, Nikka faced his spear towards Panthard. Panthard whistled, as if trying to prove he was taking this easy.

“If I show the sister this guy’s head, I wonder what kind of face she will show~?” (ED: Ugh. Sadist.) (ED 2: a bit of sadism is sometimes appreciated. brings out a character’s colors)

—play time is over.

In the inner part of the corridor, a person wearing black armor and a helmet appeared without a sound.The person stood right beside Ritta. Panthard called out to him.

“Huuh? Why the heck did you also come here?”

“A withdrawal order was handed down. Insect Master, Bird Master, and Dragon Master were all done in.”

“Wha! Oi! What did you just say?!?”

“It’s a withdrawal order. Don’t make me repeat it twice.”

Overpowered by the armoured person, Panthard stop inquiring.
NItta stood there trembling and holding on to his spear. He didn't want to check the person behind him. Feeling as if his whole body was frozen, Nikka couldn't help but pray that the person would just go away.It's not that they only differed in mere statuses.

—the difference was by entire dimensions.

As if stopping himself from breathing too much out of fear, Nikka's tears started to flow.In his fear, he did not even notice that he was prioritizing his own safety over his own blood-related sister's.Their natural bond only brought them to that level. (ED: This ending is pretty depressing.)

"That girl—I see, very interesting," the armoured person muttered, and without even looking at Nikka and Ritta, he silently disappeared from the place without even a sound from the clunky armor, as if he were a ghost.

Nikka, who left behind, dropped with bottom to the ground, still trembling. He finally leaked out some words.

"H-Help me……."

After a while, he went to his injured sister and began nursing over her wounds. (ED 2: when I read nursing, I thought of puppies licking each other's wounds)

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changes: Top Five -> Big Five

Chapter 45 Union part 4

"The rampaging corpses around the castle town have been put to rest . Please, be relieved."

"We thank you for your cooperation."

The Commanding Officer, Kirkton, gave his thanks to those people.The surviving soldier also did likewise and saluted.The people that had appeared before us were adventurers.They were 3 of the Big Five, the superior people Seigel was talking about earlier. Wait a minute– including Xinbu, aren't there 4 of them here?

"My~, this sure is surprising~, and the damage is really a big deal~. Even I can't revived a dead person~, you know~?"

Light brown hair with the ends coiling around down to her shoulder and well-defined features, she is a beautiful woman, but has a peculiar way of talking.She wears a robe similar to the one Roel has, However, hers is much more beautiful.

“It’s not about that, Yuyu-dono. There is something else that we need you to inspect as quickly as possible.”

“Is it something that only a High Priestess like me can handle?” (IcedTea: She’s asking if the situation is that bad that only she can do it. She’s not trying to sound condescending.)

【”Angel of Charity” Yuyu, LV:88, Class: High Priestess, Rank: A】

With an air of calmness and pleasing grace, Yuyu went over to where Tifelia lay.As the adventurers saw Tifelia, their eyes widened in shock at seeing her painfully gasping. They all unintentionally leaked out a small gasp.

“This is…..how can such a master like Tifelia-dono be in such state….”

【”Monk of Salvation” Mugen, LV:94, Class: Super Monk, Rank: A】(IcedTea: Something about Super Monk is really funny….)

One of the three, a man with a necklace of round beads around his neck, looked over Tifelia.Roel told me secretly that she heard that the necklace was known as prayer beads. He had a head without a single hair, shining with the reflection of the sun’s rays. (ZeRenMi: Eromanga Flash anyone? Just me? Ok *-*)It’s sort of like Grundom’s head. Sorry, I know this is not the situation for these kind of thoughts.

“Mugen-dono, would a person of your Class know anything about this condition?”

“Umu, if it was my specialty, I could become your strength, but……it’s not a kind of curse. I’m certain of that.” (IcedTea: A manly man has appeared….what’s with the cliched line….)

Kirkton drooped his shoulders, discouraged by Mugen’s answer.That person Mugen, I wonder what kind of fighter he is? (ZeRenMi: I thought Ryua was bashing him until I read the next line…) Does he fight with a weapon, or with magic? I can’t even begin to guess.

“As little help as I am, my music could lessen the pain a little, but….I wonder how much it’ll help….”

【”Battlefield Poet” Laurel, LV:90, Class: Bard, Rank: A】(9: His class is simpler than I thought.) (IcedTea: I agree. Bard?!? That’s it?)

He had long, blond hair that went past his shoulder–I thought he was a woman, but he turned out to be a man. (9: Ryua definitely thought “damn, it was a trap!”) (IcedTea: “It’s a trap!” -Wise words from Admiral Ackbar.) **(ZeRenMi: Heres my edit of this line – With his long blonde hair going past his shoulders, I mistakened him for a woman but he was a man – Don’t know if it’s better or worse than this version**
)But still, if you said that he was a woman, I would be completely deceived by feature like that.

“Please proceed, Laurel-dono. I request it of you.”

After Kirkton bows his head in assent, music began to flow. The timbre of the harp invited drowsiness and tranquility–I, who was still tense from fighting despite the fact that the battle had already ended, felt all my strength drain out of my body and sat down on the spot.

All the others also fell one by one to the ground, listening in ecstasy. (9: eargasm) (IcedTea: Lol)
At the same time, I noticed that Tifelia-san's expression seemingly softened.

"Ah, amazing! Her face really did soften up!"

As I shouted, the three noticed me for the first time. It seems that Kirkton also remembered my existence, and walked towards me. (ZeRenMi: this feels like a class bullying with the wording) (IcedTea: now that you mention it….)

"Ah, it's you–I still haven't given you my thanks.For what happened, I am truly grateful to you. Even though you are still young, it was a splendid deed, you know."

Kirkton smiled as he thanked and praised me.Mugen asked about the circumstances, and Kirkton started to explain it to them.

"……for such person to exist. It's hard to believe that information out of the blue, but with Kirkton-dono saying so, it should be the truth."

As he said that, light flashed off his glittering head when he turned his face towards me.From his strict looking face, he seems to be a really stiff person.With his heavy, black robe, his appearance also made him seem that way.

"I also have quite an interest in that girl~, you know~, but right now, situation we have is much more important~." (IcedTea: Oh. Another person who is interested in the MC. How many is that now?)

Just as I thought, she is weird manner of speaking.Yuyu held out her hand, which began to give off a pale light. The light shined on Tifelia-san, and coupled with Laurel's music, Tifelia's facial expression relaxed even more.

"Ooooh!!…….Just as I expected from Yuyu-dono and Laurel-dono!"

"However, with just this much, it's not enough to resolve the main problem.We can't entirely grasp the nature of the disease that's eating into Tifelia-san…"

" -My blood contains an incurable disease-…….Inoro, no, Juo said that."

Everyone reacted to my words and faced me. Now that I think about it, I am the only one who knew the name Juo. That Inoro, Juo now, being one of the 12 Demon Generals is something only Roel and I knew about.I was quite embarrassed because I didn't expect to be the center of attention, but I tried my best to explain. Almost everybody who was listening reacted to me mentioning Juo.

“Necromancer you say?…… to stain your hands with such a forbidden technique….inexcusable!!!”

Pashi Mugen smacked his palm with his fist.Yuyu, Laurel, and the others who weren’t there when it happened all wore gloomy expressions.Roel and I were the only ones left out **(who didn’t understand)**.

“What is “forbidden”?” (9: Ryua doesn’t know the word.) (IcedTea: As in she has never even heard the word “forbidden”. She has no idea what it means.)

“Skipping the difficult stuff, it means a prohibited magic. (ZeRenMi: Seigel-san, you didn’t define ‘‘forbidden’ but ‘forbidden magic’.) (IcedTea: Tru…)If you use it, no matter what country, you will lose the right to enter their territory.”

Seigel gave a simple explanation.Forbidden. That is how much everyone here hates Juo’s magic. Certainly, when I saw him raise the dead and forcibly compelled them to fight their comrades, I too felt anger.
A person that uses magic to toy with other humans–I thought of Juo as such a person.

“Those guys claimed that they were from the Revived Demonlord army…I wonder what that is?”

“All that information will be gathered and reported to His Highness.”

Kirkton declared it such a cold way that it gave me shivers.I wonder what was it; did I say something strange?Nearby, Yuyu was chanting something at Tifelia-san.It seems like Tifelia-san received some more recovery-like magic, since once again, her breathing became a bit less erratic. Seeing this, Roel grew increasingly interested while watching Yuyu-san work.

“A-amazing. Yuyu-san, what was that just now? What was it?”

“My~, you are~…..~?”

“Pardon me, I’m adventurer Roel. That one is Ryua-chan.”

“I see~, young ones~. I want a taste~……..” (9: Ero onee-chan.) (IcedTea: Oh? This interest is a different type? I like this?) (ZeRenMi: More yuri? :D) (IcedTea: I knew everyone couldn’t resist commenting…)

“Eeeh?”

“Are you still just a healer~? If that’s the case~, then you won’t understand a fully detailed explanation~. Let’s make it simple~: It’s like a magic that neutralizes pain~, ok~?” (IcedTea: Healer seems to be a lower class than Priest.)

“Heeeh~?”

Understanding or not, Roel ambiguously nodded her head. Just I was feeling relieved that a

magic like that existed, Yuyu continued to speak, as if she had seen through me.

“But still, it won’t remove the main source of the problem~. Even to the bitter end~, it can only lessen the pain~.

If it stays like this~, I don’t know what will happen…….~” (ZeRenMi: I’m just imagining a long drawling speech from her.)

“Anyhow, let’s report the details we have up ‘til now to His Majesty. I would like request everyone here to vacate the area for now.”

There were no one who refused Kirkton’s request. Now that I think about, was the king safe? I wonder where he is?

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“Well done.”

After the report was finished, it wasn’t the king that replied, but rather the old guy close by. I couldn’t properly understand Roel’s difficult explanation, but it seems that he is called a Prime Minister, someone who helps the King. The place Kirkton had guided the king to was an underground room below the Colosseum floor. The simple, plain floor opens and leads you toward what seems to be a shelter. If I didn’t know about it beforehand, i wouldn’t noticed it at all.

“Everyone of you, I see that you are all tired today.There more things to reward you with, but for today, take a rest inside our castle. About the reward, at this time will be tomorrow, we will pass on to you.” (Prime Minister)

“The girl right there……wait.” (King)

In that moment, I thought it was someone else, but it seems I was named by the King.Why the king? Not understanding the situation, I approach him.

“Ever since the contest, I have been curious. Looking at the documents, you are still C rank….”

“Y-yeah. It’s because I just recently became an adventurer…..”

“Ryua-chan! Keigo! Keigo!” (9: keigo is like a way of speaking with respect or something like that) (IcedTea: Basically, “Ryua-chan. Respect. Speak in a more respectful tone.”)

Roel is pinching me–it hurts. I wonder what “keigo” is. Roel noticing that I don’t know what it is, covered her mouth with her palm while gasping “no way!”

“Your Majesty, let us converse about all of it, including her case, tomorrow.”

“From what I have heard, your actions rise above the rest. It is truly magnificent.”

The King, ignoring the Prime Minister, looked at me and continued talking. The Prime minister, now irritated with the King's behavior, turned on the King as if obstructing me.

"Your Majesty!! Right now, that is not really important, isn't it?! Do you understand the state of affairs in the Country?!?"

The Prime Minister's thundering voice shook the King, who stepped back dejectedly.Even though the King should be even more of a big-shot than the Prime minister, the old guy's scolding made him silent.

"Ahem"–The king cleared his throat and started to speak.

"In any case, those with serious injuries which need immediate treatment and those that have lost their homes will be prioritized and given temporary dwellings. Is that fine, Bermund?"

"As you command."

Due to the need to house the injured, the rooms became full. Roel and I were delegated to sleep in the female soldiers' rooms. On the way back, I saw the corpses of the soldiers, adventurers, and audience members who had fallen victim in the action being lined up in the Colosseum. As I watched the scene, I felt something crack on the inside, so I immediately turned away and left that place.

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"Fuu~, I'm worn out~……..
Ah, Ryua-chan, so you were at this place…"

Above the ramparts, I, who was immersed deep in thought, was found by Roel.It seems like up until now, Roel has been treating the wounded. And that person, Yuyu, took more time than I thought she would to carefully teach Roel. Roel was thoroughly pleased with it. (9: Fumu, I wonder what was "taught"?) (IcedTea: Hehe)

"Roel…….I wasn't able to protect them……."

The pleasant evening breeze felt even colder than usual. There were several buildings that were destroyed. The surviving people that lived in those places are either taking refuge in the castle or in the large buildings that weren't damage right now. It's dark and you can't see everything, but it's like the scene just floated before my eyes.

"Even though I had planned to never see this kind of scene again……..
Even though I went to the trouble of training in the Caves of Hell…."

"If Ryua-chan wasn't here, the situation would be much worse.
Everyone is saying that, you know. That's why: don't blame yourself, OK?"

Roel gently snuggled up to me and encouraged me. I understand what she is saying, but

inside me, there is something that I just can't put to rest.Roel stared at my silhouette.

"I-if I hadn't met Ryua-chan,I wouldn't have met so many different people, and I wouldn't have as much confidence in myself. If I told you "thank you"…..is that bad?" (9: Roel being cuter than usual.)

I became confused.Her snuggled-up body started to tremble. That's right–today, in only one day, Roel had experience many terrifying things. That time when Juo was about to do something to her, and then there's also the Revived Demonlord army's massacre. I was not the only one who had seen those horrific scenes. It was exactly the opposite–they also fought. Seigel, Gantetsu–everyone was fighting, then and now. There are people who were nearly killed and also the injured who still haven't woken up. And despite that, saying that "I wasn't able to save them" might have been self-centered.

"Ryua-chan, no matter what happens, I will forever be with you, ok? Forever and ever, I want to continue saying my thanks to you" (9: Ba-baka na! Ore no yuri sensor ga bousou suru datto?!) (IcedTea: Aaaaawhhhh.)

"Roel……"

I took Roel's cold hand, and after holding it tightly for a moment, I started feel its warmth.I don't know what the cause was, but Roel suddenly embraced me, as if she were jumping at me.

"Wha-what's the matter?"

Like a tiny animal, she was shaking and, for a bit, her hair fluttered in the wind.Her slender arm circled around my back, firmly clutching me, refusing to let go. How was this soft body able to persist up until now? Though I don't know whether this could calm her anxiety, I embrace Roel back.

"Ryua-chan……."

"Roel, I'm sorry. I only kept complaining…….. That's right–everyone, too, bears their own big problems and scars. I need to stand a little bit more firm, right?"

Roel didn't say anything–she just trembled in my arms.However, the shaking gradually started to settle, and I felt like she had been given peace of mind.I don't know why, but my heart has been throbbing faster and faster.I raised Roel's face–for some reason, I believed that she was probably making the same face I had on.Her feverish cheek revealed the speeding sounds in my chest. Suddenly getting embarrassed without realizing it, we separated. (9 and everyone else: Uuuuuuuuuuuuuu!!!!!!!!)
Roel wasn't particularly surprised, but she had a somewhat feverish facial expression on.

"T-that was s-somewhat weird, wasn't it…."

Roel finally moved and scratched her cheek, looking really embarrassed.Not knowing how I should react, I was only able to mirror the same gesture.

"It sure has gotten colder….so let's go back to our room…."

To drive away the embarrassment, I took Roel's hand and started to walk. From the lights here and there on the castle walls, and from the darkness of the skies–in the gapes between those lights, I felt the end of the day. After the end of this tragedy and fierce fighting, looking from this place towards the empty skies that seemed that it could swallow everything, the evening seemed lonelier than usual.

Changes:

Hasto → Hust (from the 2nd arc)

Changed Churchill's monster name

Chapter 46 Union End

◆-Side- Demonlord Castle◆

In a vast land covered in freezing cold weather, ice grains are blown violently eternally towards the distant horizon. Within this hinterland environment which does not have any mercy for ordinary men, there was one monster returning to a towering castle. A tiny clown pixie spotted the incoming Demon Garuda, and believing that the monster came from far away, she immediately reported it to her master.

"Ma-Maou-sama! Maou-sama! The Demon Garuda came back!"

"Just what are you screaming about? Is Maou-sama here?"

"Gegeh! Panthard! Just when did you came back?!?"

"Just now," Panthard replied slovenly. He held the visor of his cap, fixed it back in place and started to walk again.

Despite receiving a withdrawal order and having returned to the Demonlord Castle, Panthard still received a shock after learning that the three other Demon Generals had been defeated.(IcedTea: Perspective will randomly shift from 1st person Panthard to 3rd person narrator….)

Even after taking into account the presence of the Master Knight, I thought that we could destroy the Avangard Kingdom.I don't plan to admit defeat yet, but we ourselves should have had enough strength in store. The magic beasts we use to attack the castle town were entirely defeated by the Big Five; the greatest miscalculation, however, was that girl from

Avangard Caves.Under the pretext of eliminating a dangerous element through summoning a monster, it was no more than half-serious, half-play at that time.I didn't think that she was a beast to that degree.If at that time, I had put more effort into crushing her—

"no, I would've just ended the same as those three"

"Panthard, although I've felt for a long time that you are disgusting, I shall be adding "talking to yourself" to the list, m'kay?" (9: Congratulations! Panthard earns the title "talking to oneself".)

"Shaddup, you floaty thing, you are getting in the way, you know?"

"Pffft, after this incident, you will get a scolding from Maou-sama: that's why my laughter cannot be contained! Pfffft *giggles*"

He shoved the small mischievous clown that had been flying around him, as if trying to obstruct him, away with his hand. After that, it didn't bother him at all.He walked through the long, cooled corridor, and at the end lied a wooden door.As it opened with a peculiar sound, everyone else was already seated in the chamber beyond.No, it was not all of them. Those who taken their seats were the 8 Demon Generals, the Demonlord, and his 2 close aides.

"Really…that guy isn't here," is what I thought, but immediately, I realized.

[That guy] is still shuffling around somewhere. (IcedTea: Everyday, he's shufflen'…) That bastard lacked any cooperativeness, even to the point of resenting everyone. So nothing ever gets done.Only glancing at the vacant seat, Panthard didn't let his thoughts out of his mouth.The news that the other 3 died in battle had already spread; everyone here had already grasped the situation. In the wide room, a long table was arranged, with candles are lined up here and there. The monster that was making fun of Panthard not long ago was heading to where the Demonlord sat.

"…….Before this, I would like to apologize. I'm sorry."

Panthard apologized while seated.The atmosphere became silent, but no one condemned Panthard, instead looking at the 2 close aides which was on both side of the Demonlord.Of those two, the armored person was the one who announced the Withdrawal Order.And the other was a middle-aged grey haired man wearing a Tuxedo.Even if the two are separated from the rest, the two of them are the only ones who are allowed to converse with the Demonlord.
If you compare the 12 demon generals and the two of them, the difference will make you a little bit unhappy. (9: It didn't state what kind of comparison it is….) (IcedTea: I'm guessing the aides have it better, you know, better clothes, status, etc….Panthard is feeling jealous of their hierarchical position after all…..)(9: i think its the sense of trust)
Panthard was feeling jealous to the 2 close aides to the point of self-deprecation.
Even though from the start, we didn't have any things such as hierarchy–

"Now that everyone has already gathered, let us begin. Well, having said that, I guess that

all of you should have already caught onto the agenda." (Batram)

"don't have any plans to criticize those who participated in the Avangard capture operation. It's just that various questions remain unanswered/unexplored." (Scaly dude)

The speech which came from the aide in the tuxedo, Batram, was interrupted by a man whose face was covered in scales.He put his feet on the table and had his eyes closed; he appeared to have really bad manners.

"Especially that part: Why wasn't the master knight killed off?"

"…….Are doubting me?"

Juo glared at the scaled man with a dissatisfied face.The scaled man ignored it, and looking over everyone else, continued his words.

"If it was me, I would've directed all my attention towards targeting the Master Knight and killing her.That way, they would've despaired when she died—ain't my way better?

And 'cause of that, the enemy's morale would plummet on its own. Starting a war with a surprise attack, if you cut of the head, then it's PERFECT!!!"

"I see…..Doridon has a qualities of a demon…."

The man who approved of it was demon-like himself. He had slanted eyes and fangs that protruded of out his mouth, and was scratching his long nails across the top of the table. No one looked into his eyes.

"Stop joking around, Ganaws. There are certainly many factors to reconsider, as well as the loss of 3 Demon Generals. There is also what Doridon said….but isn't there an even greater issue?"

Panthard retorted Ganaws while he talked composedly. Even after having faced the criticism of the demon-man, Ganaws was, as usual, still scratching the table. As for the greatest factor, all of them had already recognized it.

"It's that girl called Ryua, isn't it….," muttered an old humpbacked man.

The silence around the table answered his question. Raising his incredibly wrinkled face, the old man pointed his finger upwards and started drawing circles in the air.

"Even if we went with Doridon's plan, the result would stay the same. To bring down a demon general in one hit….? HA! Even if I saw it with these old eyes, I probably wouldn't believe it." (IcedTea: I'm a huge fan of this old dude. Xin is awesome too, of course.)

"Considering what will happen in the future, that girl will probably be an obstacle."

The armoured aide opened his mouth on that point first. *If you went to the trouble to actually go there, wouldn't it have been good if he had fought the person…*someone probably

thought. (IcedTea: I assume this means that the aide was there. Just to make it clear….)But of course, not a single one of the demon generals objected to that person's point.

"Fumu, well then, won't all of the Demon Generals be defeated? Fuohoho (etc…etc…)"

The old man laughed, enjoying his own joke immensely.

"Nentoro, if that is the case, then we will have you be the first to go."

The armoured person didn't permit the joke. *He's not kidding* everyone else thought.

"'Twas a joke. There might be a chance that all of us bite the dust, but the . (IcedTea: ♪♪♪All of us bite the dust♪♪♪)
Let me think….if it was me, I would hide myself in the areas outside this castle. In other words, let us advance in accordance to the plans we had at first."

"Fumu, are there any other opinions that anyone else wants to offer?"

Batram inquired of all of them, and was replied with continued silence. He glimpsed towards the Demonlord who wasn't talking; he sat there, not moving a wink. Batram understood what the Demonlord may have wanted to say; however, he did not pursue it with any sort of action. (9: Butlers are awesome!! but i want one, a female one!!!) (IcedTea: Indeed.)

"I see your point. In that case, regarding my proposal……..Xin."

"Y-yess?!?"

The small clown pixie named Xin jumped, surprised from the sudden nomination, and did a meaningless bow in the air.

"If you have the time to doze off on top of Maou-sama's lap, then I shall give you the job."

"M-Me and that Ryua?!? No way! Nowaynowaynoway–it's to~~~~~taaallllyyyy impossible!!!!! I mean, wasn't that Churchill done in right?!? He was creepy guy, but among the Demon Generals, didn't he have prominent strength? And yet I willl~? Geez, just what in the world are you saying?!?"

"Silence. No one here has any expectations of you, you know. (IcedTea: Ouch. Harsh.)
Listen here. I will have you observe this girl called Ryua from here on. What kind of person she is, what kind of food she like or hates, when will she laugh, cry, get mad, what type of guy she like or hates? Any trivial information is fine. So, generally speaking, you will collect information" (9: But ryua doesn't have any type of guy she likes) (ZeRenMi: non-yuris'ers must convert or be purified)

"Eeeeh~? Is there a~ny meaning in that?"

"At the present time, it's necessary information. If it will be useful or not, I too don't know. It might be not of help.

However, there might be a weakness we wouldn't of thought of. This is very important you know–only you can do this." (9: ……..those last words)

"Ueeeee……..Ma-Maou-samaa"

"…….I'm expecting good news from you."

With the Demonlord's low-toned encouragement, Xin's face brightened up. While yelling energetically, in the blink of an eye, Xin's figure disappeared from sight.

"That sure was simply done……."

Doridon amazedly murmured. Batram's judgement is likely correct; however, even while participating in the conversation, Doridon was still looking for a way to get rid of Ryua himself. But if he said so in this place, he will be stopped. Doridon was secretly waiting to test it out.

"We are in a closing mood, but I have one last thing I would like to play with…come in…"

Nentoro clapped his hands twice, and from another entrance, not the one Panthard used, a monster came out. Behind it walked Davitz and 3 Avangard kingdom soldiers. (9: he is the guy that attacked Ryua when they were on the way to avangard) They had cautious faces as they stared in every direction.

"Davitz-kun, thanks to you, we had obtained lots of valuable information. You have our thanks."

"Thanks for letting me out of prison by taking advantage of the chaos. After this I will cooperate with you guys as much as needed."

Vuglar smiles rose on the faces of the 3 former Avangard Kingdom soldiers too. Making a circle with their thumb and index finger, they gestured, demanding money.

"It's a promise. Here you go–you will be glad with these, right?"

"Nentoro-jiichan, quickly finish it up. After all, I only brought them here for that."

Juo sluggishly gestured by slicing his hand across his neck. Nentoro nodded and stood up from his seat.

"Now then, you guys are scum who sold their comrades for their own self-interest, and should be trash that is looked down upon. It's like there was no change at all……As I thought, you scum don't have any worth."

"Haa…..?"

Davitz shut his mouth while looking like an idiot. Nentoro moved his finger. One of the soldier immediately hacked at the head of the other soldiers. The head danced through the air, blood spewing out the sliced end of the neck while it rolled on the ground. In that mere

instant, from the time the head flew off and fell on the ground, the body also collapsed onto the floor.

"E-eh…..? A-aa"

The soldier looked down at his own sword and towards his comrade's corpse. Finally understanding the situation, his body couldn't stop trembling. Seeing this, Nentoro didn't smile, but rather, sent out cold gazes.

"O-oi, what the hell are you doing?!?"

"No–it was not me–m-my b-body just did it on–"

"Didn't I said it? I do not plan to allow trash to live."

"Oi, Nentoro-san! This is not what we talked about! We are supposed to cooperate with you peo—-"

"Cooperate? pHahg!"

Spitting out the phlegm stuck in his throat, Netoro once again controlled one of the soldier's arms. Without any means to resist, the arm drew out a sword, disregarding the soldier's will.

"Did you trash really think that we were that serious on winning you over? You trash should have known what kind of people we are, am I right? We do not wish to coexist with anyone, much less with you trash who deserving of death!"

Once again, with the wave of Nentoro's fingertip, another soldier sank in blood. The soldier frantically begged for his life, but his pleas only echoed in the castle. No one heeded it. There were some who were calm, some who were grinning, some who just closed their eyes. The soldier who was left had his own sword's edge held by his own neck (ready to slice).

"Please stop……I'll do anything…….please only my life, only my life, only my life pleaaaaaaassse!!"

From the three soldier's corpse was produced a sea of blood. Davitz, who was left behind, didn't run away. No, he wasn't able to run away. His legs couldn't move as if it didn't have the will. He also had his body's freedom stolen.

"Please just forgive pleaasse……mommy~~……."

It was not an appropriate last word for a grown adult. Davitz stabbed his own sword into his stomach, and his life ended. After the brief tragedy, Juo walked into the sea of blood without hesitation.

"Hey, suffer more. Here you go."

Juo touched Davitz' corpse. The dying skin immediately turned a violet color and then

quickly corroded.

"Eeee~ww~"

"Uee" A brown colored girl, showed off her fake performance. Then she plucked of a mushroom living on her arm and softly placed it on a nearby soldier. As if the mushroom was sucking out the body's moisture, the soldier's corpse dried up.

"Well now, let us destroy one of these unforgivable people. Fuofuohoho…"

Nentoro, who was watching Juo and the brown-skinned girl play with the corpses, finally laughed pleasantly .

"……..Now then, hereafter, let us continue in accordance to our plans.Jhitchie, is the aforementioned conquering plan going well?" (IcedTea: What type of name is that?!?)(9: who knows its pronounce as Jii-chi,so if there is anyone there who has a better name tell us)

"Yea, those guys can't even reach my children's legs or arms.

I heard that they were a large Magic Country. I'm amazed ya know~. Totally seriouuus~"

"Then go back to your station. If that place falls, the things we gain will be extraordinarily numerous."

"kk~"

After boredly replying, the young man with a stretched-out stone arm walked away from the hall. The Demon General who were left stood up one by one from their seats, leaving to carry out their respective jobs. The armoured person and Batram saw them off.

"Let us show you the world, Maou-sama. Those mobs will, by no means, be able to stand against the power of our Union" (IcedTea: Noblesse anyone?)

For the first time, the Demonlord raised his head and from his eye, a tear fell, falling down his face. He was not gazing anywhere: just staring at some indefinitely empty space.

◆-Side- Avangard Kingdom◆

"Ryua, as well as Roel, for these times, you are promoted to B rank for your deeds. Later on, I will report to the guild from our side."

"Thank you very much!"

It has been several days since the raid of the Revived Demonlord Army; we had become B rank. "truthfully even if it's A rank, you would have no shortcomings," said the king, but to be an A rank, one has to take the Exam. No matter who you are, you have to pass it. Even a special case won't be recognized: that's why it's just B rank. Regarding the requirements, you need to take the A rank advancement examination, and also you will need pile up achievements, or else you won't able rise in rank. But since I repelled the Demonlord army,

and it seems that Yuyu's evaluation of Roel is staggeringly high, the achievement part is already plenty enough. But still, the advancement examination is still in the future. Right now, it's not that big a deal, and the starting day of the examination is still not yet settled. If I became A rank, I can enter Ikana village; however, I have something I'm curious about, and I inquired about it.

"King, just what is the Revived Demonlord army? Ah /remembers to be respectful\, what might it be?"

"About that, we don't know much. So, since we have already given you your whole reward, you no longer have business here."

Kirkton, who was working as guard nearby the king, ordered his subordinates to take us. The soldiers seemed to push our backs, and halfway, they became more coercive, and then we were driven out of the castle. That was somehow strange: yesterday they said that they will explain, while today they evaded it.

"I wonder if it's OK to receive this much?"

Up until now, a large amount of money we've never had before is now shaking and making jingling sounds inside the bag in Roel's hand. If we have this much, for a while, we won't have any money problems, I believe. But somehow, we are kinda stuck. Is this really fine?

"Hey Ryua-chan, about this money……Is it fine if we give this to the victims of the battle?"

"Yeah, I thought of that too just now." (9: these girls are too pure, the evil in my heart is kinda dissolving TT_TT) (ZeRenMi: really? They're washing away your impure love for yuris?) (9: my yuri love transcends all good and evil)

I came upon the idea from the depths of my mind looking at the conspicuous destroyed buildings. Looking at the unbelievable waiting line for the food line, we understood there was a great of number of people who won't be able to return to their normal life. I don't know how much this money can take care of the problem, but it should serve its purpose.

"This is what is right after all, then it's decided."

Let's return the money to the king. After we decided, we retraced our steps. From the place where the rubble was being cleared, Gantetsu's voice called out.

"Yo, the two of you. Even though it was the long-waited festival, it sure was a disaster."

"Gantetsu-san, about this money……that's right. If it's Gantetsu-san, then he should be able put it to use….."

When we explained, Gantetsu-san kept saying "Are you sure it's fine?" Gantetsu might have agreed just from our persistence, but he crossed his arms and thought for a bit.

"I'm glad that I have your trust, but sadly, I can't take it. You girls should properly explain it

to His Majesty.”

“I guess you’re right……sorry for being so unreasonable.”

“You girls must not think of exchanging money lightly. Before you know it, it could become an exchange of lives. That is the kind of thing money is.”

I followed and imitated Roel by lowering our heads in assent.

“By the way, you girls, what do you plan to do after this?”

“Ee, unnn…….I wonder~”

Seeing us glancing at the surroundings, Gantetsu saw through us, and restrained us with his hand.

“Don’t worry about the reconstruction. To the bitter end, you girls are Adventurers. Treasure that.”

“B-but I-”

“You have a goal, right?”

That’s right, my goal. There are a lot of thing I want to know, but among those there is particularly important thing. But still, there are no clues at all. That’s why I can’t do anything.

“Um er, it was something about a demon was it? I don’t know about its whereabouts, but if it’s the sage of the Wizard Kingdom, then he might know it.”

“Sage?” (9: sage-mode is gotten when you get rid of your “fleshly desires”) (Ren: i believe they can also see what cannot be seen)

“I don’t know about him that well, but Sage Hust is very famous, ya know. He is called a living thesaurus of knowledge. I heard something like he had crossed over 100 years old mark.”

“One hundred?!? If it’s that person, then he would know anything?!?”

“I-I said that I don’t really that well, you know…….it hurts~~let go…..”

I was so moved that I had reflexively grabbed onto Gantetsu-san’s collar. I was held back by Roel.

“Now that you mention it, Yuyu also said something. She said that, when compared to Hust-sama of Wizard Kingdom, my level is only up to that of a baby….”

Wizard Kingdom. After I thought *I wonder where I’ve heard it before*, I remembered that it was Tolppo’s birthplace. But I wonder, what should I do to get there?

“Aah, but about the liner……after all, we are in this unusual situation….”

Gantetsu-san was scratching his head awkwardly. Liner….so that means we need to cross over the sea with a boat or we can’t go. (9: ryua can just probably run on water with Roel on his back) (IcedTea: That is a hilarious image…)The sea….I wonder if it was that spread out blue thing I saw when I left the Kizel Canyon.Sea and ships are words that I have only ever heard in conversations. I want to ride one–I just cannot stand still.

“Eh, Ah, Hey Ryua-chan! What’s the matter?”

I took Roel’s hand and headed towards the port. Not even listening to Gantetsu-san, who was trying to stop us, or even knowing which direction the port was in, I’m getting really excited for some reason.

“Ryua-chan, we have to return the money to the king first.”

Hearing those words, I finally calmed down.

◆Throne Room◆

“Your Majesty, is it fine to let those two go?”

Bermund quietly inquired the king. The king rested his back on the throne, and he narrowed his eyes, staring as if Ryua and Roel were still there.

“Sooner or later, they will come to rise to A rank. We can wait until then, Bermund, for that. Make haste on the reconstruction and the advancement examination.”

“Haa……however, with the present conditions, we are barely there…… We don’t have enough money to cover everyth—-“

“Hurry it up.” (IcedTea: Daaaamn.)

“Ye-yes, Your Majesty!!”

Following the resounding, curt order from the king, only the answer yes was allowed. Bermund hustled away from the hall, and the king who saw him off quietly closed his eyes.

“Ryua, is it? It’s an excellent, very excellent, outstanding talent. That girl will, without a doubt, become Avangard’s strength.”

Suddenly at the same time, the thought of Tifelia surfaced, but it was immediately erased.

And for every moment he thought, Ryua’s existence to the king shined brighter and brighter.

Monster Encyclopedia

【Wind DragonHP　4339】

A dragon who possesses a wing covered in a wind of magic.If you approach it upfront, you would be minced by the blades of the winds.

【Red Scissors　HP　1775】

A gigantic bug covered in a red carapace.It was said to be so ferocious that its whole red body was influenced by the blood that it had been bathe with.Before its pair of shears, any superficial protection is of no help.

【Kaiser Eagle　HP　3210】

It was said that once its wings are reflected as a shadow on a region, you will need to have the resolution to die, the hunter of the skies.However, even prey won't notice its shadow as it sweeps in.

【Vit the hunter that resound the buzz　HP　15300】

One of the 12 Demon Generals of the Revived Demonlord Army. A prey mantis-like appearance clad in a metallic carapace, and whose arms' edge can tear anything to pieces. It can't use any magic, but as a compensation, it's destruction power has been misunderstood to be the highest wind class magic. Its Carapace has resistance regarding physical and magical attacks–In offense and defense there is no weakness.

【Dark steel Black Dragon – Churchill -　HP　28200】(9:the homo dragon) (9: yu-gi-oh anyone) (IcedTea: *In annoying Joey voice* Goooo Red Eyes Black Dragon!!!!!!)

One of the 12 Demon Generals of the Revived Demonlord Army. In size and in power, even among the 12 Demon Generals, he is top class. A power battle style with no tricks, but just overwhelming power. Even a dragon slaying weapon inflicts basically no damage on its black lustered dragon scales. Its breath boasts enough power to jeopardize an entire country.

Full Tex Arc 8

Ch 47

The Girl That Didn't Have It Part 1

◆Avangard Kingdom: The Harbour◆

「The liner heading to the Magic Kingdom, is it? With that attack the other day, the ship was damaged–the repairs might take a bit of time.」

Roel was relieved that the liners themselves were still able to move, but we don't know when we'll be able to ride on it. So, for now, we can't do anything about it. But still, it looks like you can reserve some tickets, so we did just that and left the harbour.

「Here you go, make sure you don't lose it, ok?」

After saying that, for some reason, Roel made sure the tickets were in her hands. I know that if it's me, you'll get anxious, but still…….

However, with this delay, we have too much time on our hands–we don't know what to do 'til then. Well….we only have one thing we can do.

◆Avangard Kingdom: Guild◆

The moment we entered the Guild, we were bathed in glances all at once.

"It's the Tougi Taikai–!" These kinds of words….are they people who saw my matches? Anyway, their gazes hurt. Am I being praised or being trash talked? I am confused enough that it makes me uneasy. "It's Ryua-", "a kid like that-" hearing those kinds of broken phrases really pierces me. Among them men wearing armor proudly walked through the crowd towards us.

「We are "Royal Knights". Your match during the Tougi Taikai was magnificent.」

「T-thanks.」

The people wearing that heavy armor stood in line–seeing that makes you hold back your breath. The 5 Royal Knights people stood tidily in one line. I'm happy that you praised me, but why so suddenly?

「Also the attack on the other day, that too was a splendid deed. By all means, we would like to welcome you to "Royal Knights". How about it? 」

「I- don't really have any interest in those things, so….」

「I see. However, we will always welcome you at any time. If you feel like it, you are free to come here.」

Saying that, he passed over a paper showing me the place where the Royal Knights are

located in the town. From here it's not that far, but now's not the time to go there. Understanding that I have no interest, the Royal Knights marched out in a line, their armor making clanging sounds as they left.

「It's somewhat….They are people that make you hold your breath……」

Roel and I basically had the same impression of them. In that brief moment of relief, another group came to us.

「Please! Come to our Forest Archers Union party! 」

「If you are with us, Black Thunder Spirits, it will really save us!」

「If thou want to knoweth how to use thy power, then thee should come with us. However, thou must aim seriously for the top, that is.」(9: help I don't know how to TL JP samurai talk to English samurai talk orz) (Ren: just go with old English) (IcedTea: I went with mediaeval knight's English for the most part.)

There were people who frantically invited me, and for some reason, there were people who acted very self-important, but I simply refused them continuously. Right now, I'm quite used to it, but from the beginning, I am bad with meeting people I don't know. It's more stressful than fighting. Several times, I became really tense and couldn't talk properly. Roel looked distressed from being jostled around so much, so I forcefully slip us out.

「Haa….Haa….Um, but we are already in a party, so…」

「It's fine if you come along! After all, you're cute! 」(9: die!!!! die!!! Ryua cut him to pieces!!! Cut him!!!!)

「C-cute?! I'm not something like that! 」

Roel held her cheeks with both of her hands, appearing quite abashed. More importantly, they make Roel seem like some extra bonus, and it makes me mad. (9: KILL!! KILL!! KILL!!) (Ren: GET AWAY!!! GET AWAY!!!!)

「Don't treat Roel lik-」

「Oh, what's this uproar about?」

Just when I was about to say something, before I knew it, Kirkton appeared in front of the entrance and looked at us. Tilting his semi-oblong head, it looked like he really didn't know what's happening. I wonder what the Commander of the Kingdom is doing in this place. Everyone seemed to be surprised from the unusual spotting of the man, but soon dispersed.

「Nmu? Did I happen to disturb something? 」

「Hello, Kirkton-san.」

We both greeted Kirkton together. "Oh!" Kirkton revealed a smile. It's like he just said "I

was waiting for you," and then spread his arms wide and wrapped us in them.
I wonder if this guy uses 2 swords. There were two scabbards with their swords hanging from his waist. Though I didn't have time to watch him fight before, for some reason, I'm getting curious.

「So Kirkton-san also comes to the guild.」

「Well, you see, I thought that maybe I should make some quests. With the accidents the other day, the training was not enough, as I thought, and reflected on it. Even though it's the soldiers' job to protect the country, we had to rely on the adventurers. So if we have some adventurers with good skills come join and coach their combat styles, then I think we can get better. Ah, in the end, we have to rely on the adventurers. Hahahahahahaha!」

I understand that they want to request adventurers for their training, but still, do you really need to make a quest for that? I was curious, so I tried asking him.

「Um, won't the Big Five do?」

「They themselves are busy, you see. Though, of course, I would be happy if they did. That's right! You–may I ask you!?」

「E-eh? Me?」

「Yeah, if it's you who brought down the Revived Demonlord Army, then I'm sure the morale of the soldiers will rise.」

「B-but I don't know if I can do it…..」

I completely cut off the words I was about to say. For some reason, I began wondering…..*I just saw Kirkton wearing his mantle now, is it a hindrance when he fights?*……I ended thinking absent-mindedly. No–moving on, more importantly, coaching. In other words, is it something like teaching someone how to fight? Anyhow, since the ship is still not repaired yet, I decided.

「Hey, Roel. Is it fine if we take Kirkton's quest?」

「Eh? Yeah, I'm fine with it, but…..I probably can't help you with it. Since I am not skilled enough to teach people how they can improve, and they're soldiers and I'm a healer, soo…..」

「Ah, that's right. It's 'cause Roel is a healer」

「But, if you want to do it, then don't mind me. And I also might learn some things if I watch.」

I really feel like crying every time Roel displays her kindness. This might be exaggerating, but I really think of it like that. (9: for me every time I read that, I feel like the evil part of me is screaming in pain)

「Yes, if you are fine with me?」

「Oh, that's great! So you are willing to do it! Well, that really helps, you know! 」(IcedTea: You know here too??? Why do people feel the need to say you know all the time…..)(9: its actually me, its just that i can't really find another good substitution for when i am translating this kind of line)

He grasped my hands very tightly–just how happy is he? After that, Kirkton stood beside me saying "hurry, hurry" until we finished with the quest procedures….he was so noisy. Though I haven't really talked with this person, somehow, my image of him has changed somewhat. If I had to say it, unexpectedly, he's a lot like a child.

「Yosh, it's finally done. This may be sudden, but come with me.」

We went to the castle together with Kirkton. There are ruined buildings here and there, but was this part of the place not damaged? If you compare it to those, it's pretty much clean. I've heard that the Big Five defeated the monsters that attacked the town. Even the monsters in the Coliseum, if it's just me, is too much to handle. Really, those guys are awesome. (9: no, you can probably handle it one hit, just that the coliseum might get erased).

So, A rank….I want to quickly take the advancement exam. Of course, going to Ikana village is the first priority, but now that I have learned more about the world, my way of thinking has changed.

「For some reason, I feel like we are being watched……..」

Because Roel was looking around restlessly, I too turned around. Among the people we have passed, there were many who turned around to look at us.

「After all, you totally became a celebrity after winning the Tougi Taikai. Perhaps guilds too might have their attention drawn to you.」

He was right, but still I can't agree with the final match's outcome. I want to fight Tifelia-san again. And because of that, I want her to get better quickly. If I could do something about it, then I would've, but really, nothing comes to mind. If it's Cynthia, then, does she have some kind of medicine that works?

◆Avangard Castle◆

「Now then, we're here. The training grounds are behind the courtyard. We'll be walking a bit more.」

「For Ryua-chan to teach someone, it's something to look forward to.」(9: agreed….Fufufufufu)

For some reason Roel is excited. I feel nervous coming here, since for me to teach someone is a first. And more than that, it will be people I don't know…..I might shy away.

When we came near the Castle courtyard, I suddenly got curious about Tifelia again. As I said before, I can't do anything about it, but can't I give her something? Let's try asking Kirkton-san if we can meet her later.

「This is the entrance to the training grounds.」

We opened the door. Just like the courtyard, the space had a wide open canopy. The soldiers were yelling something that I didn't understand while exchanging blows with spears and swords. Or doing push-ups again and again. Unconcerned with the open sky, it looks like the heat is focused here. Without thinking, I started fanning myself with my hand.

「After the event a few days ago, they gained this fighting spirit. I'm really happy about this, but we can't just neglect reconstruction. We really haven't taken the time to train.」

「A-amazing….Um, I'm just a chaperone, so can I watch from the sides? 」

「Yeah, I don't mind.」

I wonder if the heat from their vigour overwhelmed Roel. "Totetotetote"(footsteps) She jogged towards a suitable place and stopped there. Then, she sat on the floor hugging her knees; I stared at her sitting in that position. It's somewhat cute. (9: Commander! our yuri sensor had detected yuri essence!!)(9: it looks like this http://blog-imgs-23-origin.fc2.com/r/o/c/rocketsquare/080724rena.jpg)

「OK! HALT AND A-A-ATTENTION! 」

I wonder where that voice came from; it had a volume where it resounded throughout the entire training grounds. The entire intense training grounds fell silent. They stopped sparring, and then all greeted Kirkton at the same time. Everyone did it at the same time, so it kinda felt nice.

「Yesterday, we had a talk about our training. As everyone already knows, the champion of the Tougi Taikai, Ryua-kun, has come here to coach us. And also, you should've also heard about her feat during the attacks the other day.」

It's a somewhat crude explanation, but still, the soldiers' gazes were concentrated on me. This is something that I haven't felt, even when I was fighting during the Tougi Taikai. My heart started to throb; I thought I should say something, but the words just won't come out. Just as I thought, I am really bad at this kind of thing. Really, I don't know what to do.

「That child will train us? Certainly it was an amazing fight, but….」

「Wuun, so the commander got fired up too.」

「What the heck are you saying?!? Didn't you see that fierce, god-like strength? It's an excellent chance, you know! 」

I wonder what's with this mood. It looks like it's just Kirkton who is fired up about this. It

may be that not everyone agreed to this, and Kirkton just forcefully advanced with this. Somehow, the situation is dubious.

「Um, coaching is….what should I do?」

「Let's see. First make a group, and then I'll have Ryua-kun watch over them. You will look over their movements, then if you think of something, I want you to say it freely.」

So it's like that, I see. So it's the bad points….but from what I felt from their spars earlier–

「Then, why don't we start at once! Bull and Skin! You guys are first! 」

「Y-Yes sir!」

The both of them replied at the same time and took their stances with their swords. And, as if everyone surrounded it, all of them paid attention to the match. It's like the noise earlier was a lie, and right now, everything has fallen to silence. Looking at how all of them were seriously watching, just as I thought, everyone is serious in making an effort. I guess it's natural.

「Toaaaaaaaaaa!」

「Nanno!」

The sound of metal of the swords clanging together and a solid shout for power. It was about an even spar. Something like fighting spirit is being passed down. Was it because of the intense training earlier? Their sweat was scattered around, and their fatigue seemed to be piling up. After a few minutes of exchanging blows, the guy called Skin won. The point of Skin's sword is pointed right at Bull's nose. That's right. Since it's just training, it would be bad if you hit them.

「Stop right there!」

「I-I lose….」

In the state of sitting on his bottom, Bull recognized his defeat. Skin didn't become excited and was expressionless. Is he not happy with it?

「That was a good fight. Now then, Ryua-kun, how was it?」

「H-how was it?」

「The two you saw just now. Don't hold back and say what points they should fix.」

「L-let's see…」

The two raised their breathing and looked at me. Being watched makes me too nervous, so please look the other way. The points they should fix….can I just say it? The both of them right now…they would die on just the first floor of the Caves of Hell. I can't express it well; I

can only say good luck to them.

「Um, they are kinda slow.」

「Slow? Their movements?」

「You have to go like 'gaa' and when you get closer, you have to go 'kaaan' so you won't be blown away.」(9: Ryua is so cute~ XD)

「G-gaa~? Kaan? 」

「And then you go shuu~」(Ren: Awww~ XD)

Everyone was dumbfounded and left their mouths hanging open. This is bad; it's totally not being understood. Really, what should I do? How did it come to this, since you know, they are slow, you know.

「Let's see, Stun-san's movement….when you hit with your sword this way, it's slow. If you have too much of an opening, Bull-san just has to thrust his sword this way, and he will win, I think.」

「……It's Skin.」(9: I honestly think stun is better than skin….)

Skin corrected me, annoyed . Even though I just got his name wrong, he became somewhat mad. (IcedTea: Uh…I would too….)

「I see, what she was trying to say is that the two of you have too many useless movements. Be conscious of the actions between your strikes. In a battlefield, just a moment of time can make you lose your life. Especially Bull, you don't move after you see your opponent's move, always anticipate it. Reacting is not enough, and you were late in receiving that last blow.」

「Y-yes sir!」

In the end, Kirkton ended up explaining everything. I wonder what this is….it feels bad. Ah, that's right, it's awkward. Yes, this is it.

「Ok, then next! Ange and Ritta!」(9: I really wanted for Tusk to die in that explosion)

「Ye-Yeshir!」

Ritta? That's right, she too is a solder, so it would be obvious that she would be here. I didn't notice her mixed in the crowd. Now that I look at it properly, there are quite a lot of women here. Compared to the men, they were wearing lighter armor for easier movements. If the sword and spear is that thin, then it looks like anyone can use it.

「What's the matter!? Hurry up! 」

「Yeshir!」

「What's with that reply!」

「Yessir!」

He was not the same Kirkton as before. He spit on the ground and was really glaring at Ritta and shouting at her. At this point, Ritta looked like she was about to cry. The hand that was holding her spear was trembling. She looked just like a newborn deer compared to her opponent called Ange who faced Ritta with a calm attitude.

「Begin!」

Begin or not, it was not even a match. Ange's first thrust made Ritta's spear fly far away. And furthermore, Ritta wasn't even able to grasp the situation. The spear she was supposed to be holding was not there, and she just stood there dumbfounded. Inside the silent training ground, laughter leaked out.

「Um, I win the match, right?」

「Y-yeah」

Even Kirkton was surprised, but he can only nod from her claim. Should I also give advice here? What should I do….it's just another thing that I don't know. I feel so bad for Ritta, but I can't think of something.

「…….Ritta, come here.」

Ritta walked before Kirkton with unsteady steps. Still, it was too much, so he might help her relax. I can't give advice to her on anything, so in the end, I've noticed that Kirkton did everything, but that might be fine. Kirkton is the best person to understand these people. Then it came to coercive instruction; the dry sound of a slap resounded. Ritta fell to the ground with her cheek slapped.

「If you are not willing, then get the hell out of here!」

「Ee……」

「Did you not hear me? I said get the hell out of here! 」

「W-wait a bit. Kirkton, isn't that too cruel?」

Even though I entered between them, Kirkton's angry face didn't change. On the contrary, I think he didn't even hear what I said. It looked like Kirkton was only looking at Ritta behind my back.

「Then Ryua-kun, what point should Ritta fix so that she can improve?」

「T-that is….」

「Existence.」(Ren: Can I hit this guy?)(9: yes you may)

I heard it from among the crowd of soldiers. I don't know who said it. However, it plainly showed that some guy held malice. At that moment, Ritta threw her spear and ran towards the exit of the training grounds. Right now, I'm sure that Ritta is crying. I'm more angry at the bastard that back-bit Ritta than Kirkton who slapped her.

「Let's continue. Next….」

「Wait a minute, what about Ritta?」

「We have no need for those who run away. Next!」

Kirkton declared it all business-like. I thought he was that interesting person we spoke with earlier. So he was this kind of person. I stopped thinking, and just kept on watching the people who Kirkton was instructing. (IcedTea: Wow….assholes the lot of them….and Ryua, stand up for her, would ya!)

◆Avangard kingdom: Back Alley◆ <Ritta's Perspective>

Ritta, after abandoning her training, was walking alone. From the day she had enlisted, not even once did she slack off. And as a result of that, she always showed up diligently. Commander Kirkton may have gotten mad at her, and a part of the soldiers may want to make a fool of her, but she still worked hard. If you work hard, it will alway bear fruit, so she came to believe. However, it was already her limit. Something inside her had broken. Diligence….that thing was now thrown away. When you have something useless, there is nothing that can be done. After all, she herself didn't have the qualities to begin with. From the start, the reason she became a soldier was simply because she admired the Master Knight Tifelia. More than walking the path of an Adventurer, being a soldier in the castle defense will get her closer to Tifelia. Since her motive was foolish, it was inevitable that she could not advance. After such a long time, she just had started to think poorly of herself.

「…….I want to run away.」

Having an uncertain step made her unable to walk straight, like a drunkard, and she entered into a back alley. She didn't have any particular purpose. Ritta could only lament her powerlessness and was in shock because of it. That time too, when she, an Avangard Kingdom soldier, couldn't even defeat one monster…..she had smeared the so-called reputation of her country. If her brother hadn't appeared, she would certainly have died. Always relying on someone so she could live……..Ritta became unable to stop hating herself. (9: uhg… the feels) (Ren: I can relate…) (IcedTea: Truly hating, resenting, and despising yourself is some of the worst psychological torture in the world. It goes so far beyond complaining, pessimism, and even depression. To hate your own thoughts, your own existence….that's some dark shit.)

「……I, I wonder why I became something like a soldier?」

She kicked an empty box that had been scattered around. It flew farther than what she had expected and hit a wall quite a distance away.

I wonder what kind of alley shop, some raw trash is piled up and some bucket is just left behind, you can't really say it's a clean place.

She didn't come here with any purpose, so she finally started to feel disgusted by the place.

「Let's go back.」

「The young lady right there.」

After suddenly being addressed, she searched for a bit for the owner of the voice. Who knows when the person got there, but a suspicious middle-aged person was seated cross-legged in the alley. His mouth was covered by black beard, and he wore a turban and something like a bathrobe as an suit. A barren back alley, and then suddenly, there's this guy. Ritta decided to ignore the person and kept going.

「Young lady, don't you want to get stronger?」

Ritta twitched while reacting to those words. The person was looking at the back of her hair; she too didn't turn around towards the man. The middle-aged man who spoke didn't show any signs of moving away from where he was.

「The power to protect those dear to you….I have it, you know.」

It was an unnatural honorific. *As I thought, I should just go,* she thought, but for some reason her feet stopped, and she found herself listening to him intently. It was obviously suspicious, but even though her brain understood it, the man right there has the thing she needs. If she were in a normal mental state, she would've avoided him by now, but the Ritta right now was not in that stable mindset, and such a thought was in the corner of her mind.

「Why don't you take a look? Hohohoho!」(9: Santa Claus? Christmas is still next month, you know.) (IcedTea: You too 9? Why the you know….and Mysterious Man used Present: It's Super Effective!)(9: note i translated this back on nov)

She finally turned around. And in front of the turban-wearing middle-aged man was placed a spear that shone with a black lustre———

** IcedTea: Dun dun dun dun!! Sorry for the cliff. The chapter is just too long. This is only part one and it's like 12 pages on the doc. Hope you enjoyed it! P.S. Lustre is such a great word….

【The Bird King Who Rules Over the Skies -Barts- HP 17900】
One of the 12 Demon Generals of the Revived Demonlord Army. He appears as a Birdman, and there are wings growing on his back. His talons can hold an entire human head and crush it. While flying in the sky freely, he uses his specialty strategy to chop up his opponents by releasing vacuum blades in all directions.

Chapter 48: The Girl That Didn't Have It part 2

Ch 48 The Girl That Didn't Have It: Part 2

◆◆◆◆

◆Avangard Kingdom: In Front of the Castle Gate◆

The training for that day had ended, and the day turned to night. After that incident, in the end, Ritta didn't come back. I want to chase after her, but right now, I am being entrusted to a quest which I just couldn't neglect. Kirkton noticed my intentions and gave me this assignment.

Kirkton the Captain and the off-duty Kirkton: it's as if they were different people.

Actually, as we were parting, Kirkton returned to the mood which I knew before.

「I'm really grateful for what you did today, and I believe it was a good stimulus for my subordinates. By the way, I would like to consult with you on something. Tomorrow afternoon, I wonder if it would be fine if you could join us for combat-training with monsters?」

「With monsters? I'm fine with it, but is it alright…?」

After all had been said, I realized that it wasn't something to should've been said to a Kingdom's soldier. But still, Kirkton smiled and ignored it.

Since he was like that towards Ritta earlier, I thought that he would get really mad at me.

It seems that Roel got bored halfway, so she was trying to bearing her drowsiness.

Letting her get bored…..I feel kinda bad about it.

「That's right! If the monsters are our opponents, there might be someone who will get injured. Isn't it fine for Roel to tag along and use her recovery magic?」

「Fuua!」

Roel, who had been staring at the night sky, leaked out a weird voice upon suddenly being mentioned and pointed her face towards us.

「That's a good idea. Can I ask you to come with us?」

「I gratefully accept!!」

And then, for some reason, Roel squeezed her fire rod tightly. It kinda felt like she was going to join a fight….I wonder if it's just my imagination?

「Kirkton-san, Ritta is….」

「…..I feel sorry for her, but I cannot always spoil her.

If she can't recover from this, then that means she should stop.」

「Does Ritta have no talent as a soldier?」

「I cannot say that she has no talent at all. You may not believe it, but during the enlistment examination, her performance was good. Especially during the vitality test, it can be compared to a high ranker. That slender body of hers should have been through some considerable training. But, whether she is fit for being a soldier is another story entirely. I understand that she feels down about the situation of her brother, but nevertheless, I can't let her get by with that excuse.」

I understand what Kirkton is saying, and I believe it is correct. But still, I somehow can't just forgive how he treated her earlier. If he truly thinks of his subordinates, then he should help her. But if it was me, I wonder what I could've done?

Even though I am saying she should be helped, I can't think of anything.

「Well then, it will be early in the morning, so I will be waiting for you. After all, the reward is quite an amount! Hahahaha!」

After saying that, Kirkton waved his hand as he saw us off. I wonder if that guy lives in the castle. Since he is still wearing his armor, maybe he has something to do after this. While walking with Roel, I suddenly remembered something when looking at the fire rod she was carrying.

「That's right, if monsters are the enemy, then I have to buy a new sword.」

「Won't the sword you've been carrying from the start be fine?」

「It is dangerous since it has an explosion enchantment……in the worst case, it would be very bad if someone else got rolled up in the explosion. Mmm, I wonder if there are any weapon shops open?」

「The shops in this city are open until late at night, Cynthia said, so don't worry. It should be like she said, so wanna go and see?」

If I remember it correctly, Kozow's shop in Kwimwill would be closed at this time. In the past, after we finished a quest, we tried going to his shop at night, but by then, it was already closed.

I remember Roel complaining "This is why rural shops are–" back then.

It may be a bit late to say so, but compared to Kwimwill, it is more crowded here. When I first went to that town, I was surprised by the amount of people there, but now it's not that

big a deal anymore, I think. Though, after thinking about it, I wonder if I have gotten used to the outside world.

◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆

◆Avangard Kingdom: Weapons Shop◆

「Looks like it's still open. How should I put it….it's really different to Kozow-san's shop….」

Peeking inside, there were various kinds of weapons and protectors lined up. There are a lot them even just on the wall. It's totally different to Kozow-san's shop, which is like a narrow, indoor storage room.

Kozow-san is a good person, so I don't think badly of him at all, but still I can't help but compare this shop to his.

I thought that I should just get whatever there is and then leave, but with this much, I just don't know what is what. And they're expensive….even the cheapest falchion–a weapon with a slightly curved blade–is 2,200 gold.

「The sword on that wall, it seems to be 40,000 gold…I don't really know much about it, but what's the difference between that one and that cheap one over there.」

「That defender can be substituted as a shield because of the width of its blade. And most of all, when you position it a certain way, it has an enchantment effect of increasing the party's defense.」

The one who answered Roel's question was Aude. Why is this guy here as if it's normal?! Even though up until now, I completely forgot about his existence…… (9: Ouch.) (IcedTea: I mean, I forgot too….)

「Yo, you two. Long time no see.」

「Ah, Aude-san! When did you come here to Avangard?」

「Just a while ago. Well, on the way here, a group of monkeys attacked me and I also got pecked by some birds, it was so troublesome. Though, thanks to my partner, I was somehow able to get through 'em.」

I know it's not good, but for some reason, I just can't come to like Aude. He acts too familiar, and watching him tap Roel's shoulder just makes me more irritated.

「Since I'm C Rank, it was not all that hard. Ah! Did you hear that? It's C Rank. Haha, how troubling…」

「So Aude-san became a Rank C.」

「It sure was hard, but because I have talent, it was destined to happen. The two of you too, there is no need to be too affected by your rank. The result for each person depends on their effort. Just do it at your own pace.」

「We are rank B, you know…」

「Yeah, yeah. Oh, that's right. I wonder if there is something good here?」

Aude showed off his money to us, bought a spear in a good mood, and then went out.

What in the world is with that guy….I don't have the time to deal with him–I came here to buy my own sword.

「Hmmm, I wonder which is good….」

While pointing at each one of them with my finger, I noticed some unusual presences. And then once again, there was a crowd in our surrounding.

It seems like they are even observing what weapon I'm going to chose…really, what stubborn stares.

「So it's the kid who won the Tougi Taikai…..I think the weapon she will choose will also be top grade.」

「If it was me, I would probably choose that defender. With that strength of hers, she wouldn't be satisfied with a half-assed weapon.」

I was just about to take out a sword that I did'nt even know the name of in the unsold products corner. Do I really have to buy that defender? I've pretty much used up all of the money on hand, and the rest won't even reach half of the price of the weapon. I wonder what this detestable feeling is.

「Ryua-chan, don't mind them. So how about this?」

What Roel pointed at was not in the unsold products corner, but a bit above the falchion. It was a bit big, but the price is reasonable, so let's go with this.

「A b-bastard sword?!」

「No, it's an indication that this shop doesn't have an appropriate weapon for her. So that's just a simple defender-it has no merit for her to pay for it.」

Ignoring the noisy gallery, I bought the bastard sword. Compared to the mithril sword, the blade is longer and broader…it kinda feels powerful. This might be similar to the sword that Seigel lent me that time. After we left the shop, I once again stopped to test the sword.

「Hey, look at that. She is swinging that big sword with just one hand….」

「That sure is outrageous strength…..I wonder how high her Lvl is?」

Peeking out from the shop entrance, I could see that the gallery was still noisy. Let's go back quickly to the inn. I wonder what's on the menu for today….I hope there aren't any strange, bitter vegetables. If there is something like that, then I'll have Roel eat it.

「Those people are still looking at us…….hey, Ryua-chan. You mentioned it earlier, what is an enchanted effect?」

「From inside a weapon, there is something that attacks along the weapon, and furthermore, there is an effect that follows it, though I don't really know how a weapon becomes like that. *That* person said so. 」

Yes, *that* person. This, as well as the abnormal statuses, were taught by that person. On that day, it was that swordsman who saved me. And besides that, he taught me a lot of things. Thinking about it now, it was thanks to that person that I, who didn't know that anything goes in the outside world, have enough knowledge to survive.

I know it won't come true, but just once more, I'd like to meet with that person. When we meet, I'll give my thanks, and once again, talk about various things.

「I–I wonder what's happening there?」

On the street, there were 2 adventurer-like people fighting. Something like this has also happened before, even though this rarely happens at Kwimill. While I was absentmindedly looking at them, suddenly someone entered between the both of them. That ahoge protruding out of her hair…looking from behind, I'm sure that's Ritta.

「Put those weapons down right now!」

「Shut the hell up! That bastard stole the weapon that I was aiming for! 」

「Did you even reserve it? Wasn't it first-come-first-serve?」

「Both of you are guilty! Please, put down weapons!」

I don't know who the excessively angry one is, but I know the other one. I think it was Griiman from the final match of the preliminary round. That extravagant equipment stands out even in the night. More importantly, Ritta, who I thought was gone, showed up. I wonder what she was doing. Even though just recently, she tried to stop someone and then failed. "If I don't stop her again, she might really get injured this time" is what I thought, but Ritta is a soldier of the castle. I'm not going as far as Kirkton, but if she can't handle this much, then she is not suited to be a soldier. Maybe I should just be a demon at heart for the moment. But still, if I can't watch anymore, I'll immediately help her.

Yosh, let's go with this.

But, if I remember it correctly, Griiman should be an A-rank Adventurer. If he got serious, not just Ritta, but even the other person will be in danger.

「Weren't you hesitating over whether to buy it or not? A poor plebeian who hesitates at that price should just obediently buy a simple iron sword.」

「You bastard, I know about it, you know. If I'm not mistaken, you're the guy who lost in the preliminary round of the Tougi Taikai to a kid. You even had a hole punched into your armor and got blown away—that was so funny, hihihi!」

「What the hell did you just say….? If I just had a better equipment, such things won't happen again. Don't ever open that mouth again.」

Finally, Griiman drew out his sword. It was a different weapon than when he fought against me. There was a gem-like stone embedded in the edge of the sword–it was a rapier. Is he also going to boast about that, too?

「This sword is what you would call the Sunshine Sword. It has an enchantment effect of adding the light attribute to your attack. And it's also light, so everyone can handle it–so even supporting jobs like healers want it. Well, I knew about that, so I monopolized it! How is it? Is it too dazzling to the poor plebeian like you? Nn? After all, a simple 15 thousand gold is trivial to me. Even if you spent your whole life, you won't get it with your income.」

"15 thousand!" Both me and Roel shouted at the same time. And because of that, the two of them noticed us, but Riita interrupted with a warning and then they faced towards her.

「That's enough!」

「Get out of the way! I can't take it anymore!」

Riita, who was warning them, was thrust away, and then finally, the guy violently pointed his sword at Griiman.

「Making a fool out of the me Hell-Bear Killer Darz? I'll beat the hell out of ya!」

「Killing a hell bear? Ah I see, anyone can kill a bear cub.」

As I thought Riita can't do it….giving up on ritta, just when I was about to stop them, Ritta grasped both of their hands. "Oh?" the two raised their voices and in a moment, a scream resounded on the street.

「Ooooooooooow! L-let goooo!」

「If you have reflected on your actions, then I will let go.」

「It's gonna break, please staaahp!」

Their weapons fell from their hands. And yet Riita was still not loosening her grip. For Ritta to have that kind of strength, maybe what Kirkton said was true. Even though they are not that strong, they are still soldiers. Saying such a thing in front of them may make them angry at me, but I just unknowingly received a better opinion of them. But still, she should really let

go of them right about now.

「Ritta, I think it would be fine to let go of the-」

「Eh, Ryua-san?」

Ritta brightened up when she saw us, and at the same time, she release the two. And then Griiman saw me. He had face like he was holding something back, and he let out a hysteric voice.

「Y-you are-! Damn it, that armor was expensive, you know!! Pay me back!!」

「Ritta, that was amazing. Just as I thought, you are training habitually, right」

「Don't f**king ignore me, DAMN IT!」

She is smiling–it seems she is in a good mood. I can't think of her as the same person as in the morning. I wonder if something good happened to her.

「I'm sorry for showing an unsightly side of me. Also, I also have to apologize to Captain Kirkton. I….ever since that happened, I have been thinking.

If I always stand down, nothing will happen. If I run away from this, I am disqualified as this Country's soldier…..」

Ritta scratched her head and embarrassingly smiled. I'm glad, I was thinking over what happened after that, but it looks like she is fine.

「And so Ryua-san, please coach me well tomorrow!」

Is she that energetic? I thought as she sprinted towards the dark night. I wonder if her house is somewhere around here? She said the she will apologize, but I wonder if that scary Kirkton will forgive her….I'm only a little worried about that.

Watching her appearance, I suddenly noticed it.

「It sure is reassuring that Ritta-chan is fine.」(Roel)

「I wonder if Ritta bought a new spear?」

「A new spear? Why?」

「Because she is carrying a different spear before. It was a pitch black spear.」

「I didn't notice that–it's surprising that Ryua-chan observes those things.」

「What's wrong with that…」

Roel giggles as she smiled. Roel was kinda annoying so I grabbed her cheeks.

「Wuhat are yu dyuing!?」

「I was kinda annoyed.」

「Oi. Ryua, was it? I haven't forgotten the resentment over the armor, ok?」

Griiman put a hand on my shoulder. It was annoying, so I shook it off, but it seems that I did more damage than I expected it to.

「Ooooooooooow! This time it really brokeeeeeeee! Damn that strength!!!!!」

「……somehow this situation's become kinda stupid. Let's go home」

Darz was shocked to see Griiman unnaturally rolling over. From that start, I wasn't even talking to him. So, Roel and I walked towards the inn. There were still shouts behind us, but sooner or later, he will probably get embarrassed and stop. After all, we are already out of the crowd.

So that we wouldn't see that embarrassing figure, we didn't look back and walked towards the inn to heal the fatigue of the day.

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Monster Encyclopedia

【Great Boar HP 933】

A wild boar that was brutalized by adapting with the severe environment. Because it can even break the trees it charged through, it's strong and might often surprise middle ranked adventurers.

Chapter 49: The Girl That Didn't Have It part 3

◆Avangard Kingdom: Training Grounds◆

Today was the day Kirkton had told us about: from morning onwards, there would be real training.

It seems that they have a shift system with their training and their usual jobs, so they're pretty tough compared to how they look. Obviously, there needs to be a night shift, so Ritta had been complaining about something like that since it's hard on the skin.

But right now, Rishia was approaching her 3rd consecutive training match.

「Stop the match!」

「I-It's a lie right? For me to lose to Ritta….」

「Ehehe, I won!」

Ritta was expressing her joy while hopping. And before her was a female soldier who stood there holding her spear and staring vexingly at Ritta as if she couldn't believe it.

「Ritta, aren't you in great shape today!」

「Thanks!」

Those 2 girls, who I believe are friends of Ritta, celebrated her happiness together. It's not that her opponent is weak……rather, Rishia was stronger than Ange whom Ritta lost to yesterday. And against that opponent, Ritta easily stopped her spear–and in another instant, Ritta's spear was pointed at her throat.

Kirkton was expressionless, but unlike yesterday, he didn't shout. Though he requested some criticism of their movements from me like yesterday, but today, he said something else to Ritta.

With that difference in ability, scolding the other one would make it too pitiful. (IcedTea: Really…'cause that's what he did to Ritta……)

「Fumu, looks like you're in excellent condition. However, it's almost as if you are a different person…」

「No way~, it's gotta be the result of my everyday effort, you know~」

Ritta winked at Kirkton…….Somehow, she really does seem like a different person.

It seems that Kirkton faltered because of that since his yell didn't come out right.

「That Ritta–are you sure she didn't cheat just now?」

「Like having the weakness of her opponent?」

「Pfft. That's a bit too much…..wait, it is possible….」

A group of the soldiers was talking trash about Ritta. Those soldiers haven't even won a single spar……..Their swings are uselessly wide and all of their movements are messy. Most of all, their war-cry-like yell is too noisy.

Their speed is not nearly good enough–the monsters might even yawn from it. But when I try to point it out, they secretly click their tongues *tch*. If they're like that, then I'm going to go home. (9: Ryua is being toxic, kinda cute)

「Ryua-san, did you see it? Is there something I have to look out for?」

「L-let's see…」

I was surprised when Ritta suddenly appeared right before me. She is happily wagging left and right, waiting for my reaction.

Something to look out for is it? There are a lot of things, but if say that, I hope she won't be down. I'll just say something nice while her mood is good today…I don't want to see her down.

「It's dangerous when you *gaaaaa*, so sometimes, you should quickly *hyuuu* to change from offense to defense.」

「Understooood! Thank you very much! Ufufu~」

「E-eh. Starting in the afternoon, we will be having training outside the fields. Until that time, I grant you an hour for break.」(Kirkton)

I'm confident about this: Ritta absolutely did not understand it. After all, Kirkton was a little bit surprised too.

Ritta only thinks about attacking, and that is dangerous. And because of that, she often makes herself open. And if that opening was take advantage of, then in a blink of an eye, she might lose her life. But still, I think that the style somehow suited her thanks to her ridiculous physical strength.

Ritta being that amazing–I can't think that she is the same Ritta from yesterday's spars.

「So this afternoon, we will be having an actual combat with a monster. I'm looking forward to it, right, Ryua-san!?」

Ritta hugged my arm. I seem to be seeing more than one of Ritta's unexpected sides today. And, for some reason, I'm more curious about Roel who is glaring at us with puffed cheeks. And then, like a sore loser, she hugged my other arm. Both sides are getting heated….. (9: my yuri sensors detected something!! T-this is…yuri!!)

Please excuse me from eating lunch in this condition.

◆Lunch◆

「Avangard Restaurant's food is so tasty that people talk about it all over. After all, various famous people even came here to eat.」

The restaurant that Ritta showed us was a place with inorganic (not wooden) tables and chairs arranged in a fixed distance from one another. I imagined that it would be something similar to Pablo's shop, but it was totally different. For meals, you can only choose from A and B; there isn't anything like a menu.

「Umm, would it be fine to eat with you?」

The one who said it was one of the 2 girl friends of Ritta. It looks like their ages are about the same as Ritta's. When I imagine a soldier, it would be a brawny person, but it seems that there are girls like this too.

Irin and Shuri, from the story I heard, seemed to have joined around the same time Ritta did. It seems that, one way or another, its thanks to these 2 that the slow Ritta was able to make it to where she is now. Certainly when they are here, Ritta frequently smiles. No, somehow, it feels like she's been having fun ever since.

「Ryua-san, I saw your fight, you know! Even though you are about the same age as us, to be fighting with Tifelia on equal terms–we weren't able to believe it!」

「From my analysis, neither of them were serious in that fight. It is hasty to conclude that they are on par.」

The thoughtlessly loud voice came from Irin, a pink, plump sheep-haired girl. The one who seemed to analyze things was a girl with green hair and glasses and looked like a serious

person, Shuri. The more I look at them, the more I wonder why such normal girls became soldiers. Though, the girl who analyzes is not quite normal……

「When the Demonlord army attacked, it seems that you played a big role. Captain Kirkton told us to step back, so we seriously stepped bac-」

「Irin, from my analysis, that conversation should be prohibited in front of Ritta.」

「Ah……sorry.」

Ritta who sat besides them got a little dark. However, that was only for an instant, and then Ritta laughed exaggeratedly, which gathered the attention of the entire restaurant

「C'mon, I don't really care about it anymore, ok? In the end, I survived, so it's not counted! Not counted!」

Watching Ritta laugh, the 2 friends looked like they had noticed something different. Even me, looking at Ritta, there is something weird about her.

「Now, now, let's eat. Let's eat four sets like Roel-san!」

「*phumu?!*」

There were plates in front of Roel enough for 4 people and she got embarrassed about it a little too late. It seems that she hasn't swallowed the food inside her mouth, and she ended up making a strange sound. With this much, I won't be able to cover for her…even the 2 friends of Ritta's were lost for words. After all, while we were talking, without any of us noticing it, she had already eaten 4 persons' worth. (9: I somehow keep forgetting that Roel is a glutton, though it's kinda cute.)

「A-as expected from someone who made a party with Ryua-san….」

「From my analysis, that is rude to Ryua-san.」

Even if you don't analyze it, I already understood that it's rude…though, I can't bring myself to say it….

****

◆The Mithril Mines◆

A dungeon not far from the Avangard Kingdom castle town, the mithril mines. In the past, it seems that it was a series of mithril mines that functioned properly, but right now, you can't

find any more mithril, and so it was abandoned. It also looks like this place relied on imports of mithril-made weapons and armor.

<Danger Level 21>

More dangerous than the monsters, the dungeon has a series of complicated tunnels that make it easy to get lost…it's a place where, if you are not B-rank or higher, you are not permitted to enter.

And in this dangerous place we were walking through was the training grounds for field combat. Among the soldiers, there were people who looked obviously uneasy. For sure, compared to Kizel Valley, the presence of dangerous monsters was greater by far.

I wonder why Kirkton chose this place for training? There won't be any worries of getting lost near the entrance, but even so, considering of the abilities of the soldiers, it's too dangerous.

「Are there any cowards here? If so ,then you should go back quickly. Only those who seriously want to become strong should remain. Don't worry, I won't condemn anyone who returns.」

In a strict voice, Kirkton declared this to all the soldiers. What remained was the silence of the abandoned mines and that of the soldiers.

The silence was the expression of their will; no one was running away from here.

「Good, then let us begin. Few days ago, the monsters that attacked the kingdom were, it goes without saying, all strong monsters. And most of them are worthy of being as strong as a floor monster with a danger level of 20.

Fights against the monsters with the soldier's skill level became fultie, and many of them died in the line of duty. I'll have you men and women receive their wills. Of course, I am not saying that I need you to be able to fight them immediately. However, I'll have you at least able to defeat the monsters here easily.」

「Th-that's good. I thought that our opponents would be the floor monsters here. I was really having chills over my life….」

The soldiers who made a stir received a sharp glare from Kirkton. It was as if the glare told them that complaints were prohibited. But still, no matter how severe it is, I think that this is too strict. But I can't really say that to Kirkton right now.

「Even if we don't include the strength of the floor monster here, you would still be in a bad spot. However-」

Kirkton cut off his words and once again glared at the soldiers. And the soldiers held their breaths….

「We are the ones who will protect this Country.」

The importance of those words—I think everyone here understood its meaning. There is not even a single person who leaked his/her dissatisfaction anymore. So, that means they have decided to put all their effort into it, huh.

「In this narrow passage, monsters won't be able to surround you. That means, you can safely fight one on one to a certain degree. Though, just as I was talking about it, it looks they have already appeared.」

【Goblin x 2 appeared! HP 153】(9: yay goblin finally appeared!!)

It's a monster with the same height as a human kid. In their hands, one held a club, and the other a rusty sword. They sprinted full speed out of the inner part of the tunnel.

「Hou, a goblin is it? An opponent with good timing. In this passage, they won't be able to attack at the same time. Now then, who will go?」

「I will do it!」

The one who came forward was one of the soldiers who talked about Ritta behind her back. This may just be my intuition, but with that person's ability, he won't be able to handle that speed. Hopping left and right, the goblin toyed with the person using movements completely different from a humans.

It splendidly evaded the soldier's wide blow, and the goblin struck out with its rusty sword. It wasn't enough to severely injure him, but still it was enough to make blood fly out.

「U-uuuuwaaaaaah!」

The human soldier who wasn't able to react to the counterattack endured the pain and, in a panic, the soldier randomly swung his sword around. And jumping backwards without delay….and towards the goblin head, the one who thrust her spear precisely at it was Irin.

【Irin Attacked! the Goblin received 170 damage! The goblin was defeated! HP 0/153】

「According to my analysis, the nimble movement may easily puzzle you, but if you look carefully, it's monotonous and full of openings.」

「Why are you the one explaining, Shuri….」

“Ooh” the soldiers were in admiration. I see…as soldiers, their skills are sparse, and so, I starting to understand Kirkton’s worries. In the attack a few days ago, there were soldiers who were able to fight back and soldiers who couldn’t. Even though she joined at the same time as Ritta, I can only say that that one hit is splendidly done.

「So, depending on the spot you aim, and not depending on the power you put into it, you can give it a serious blow, right?」

「Eh? Yeah, yes, that’s right! Ehehe~, I got praised by Ryua-san.」

Irin seemed to blush shyly.

There is no time for that though, as the other goblin had jumped towards her—their distance is close to nil.

However, it was only up till there. The Goblin’s head was caught by Kirkton and was slammed on the wall. And then, without delay, he dealt a final thrust into its stomach.

「Fuaa…..that was shocking~」

「Don’t be negligent! Just now, you might have died one time already, you know!」

「I-I’m sorry…..」

Inside the narrow cave, Kirkton’ angry roar resounded. It is a reasonable point, but that right now was also my responsibility. Still, I didn’t know that she would be so happy and end up that defenseless.

「You guys too, don’t think you are not involved! Those monsters are always aiming for your lives, you know! Just like that!」

While Kirkton was facing the soldiers, he sliced a goblin which had drew near behind him into 2 pieces with the sword in his hand. The other sword stayed as is in its scabbard.

After those 2 goblins, it seems that one more appeared. At any rate….why is this Cave so full of goblins?

「Before we knew it, it looks like the cave became a den of goblins. The big shots are probably inside the inner part.」

「Roel, please heal that person.」

「Ah, O-ok.」

With Roel’s heal, the wound that the soldier had closed. The groaning person–was he

feeling mortified or miserable?–he didn't even say thank you.

「Is there someone here who's afraid? If there are, then you should go back immediately!」

「Me me! Please let me fight them!」

The one who energetically raised her hand was Ritta. The quiet soldiers suddenly became noisy.

Kirkton and her 2 friends too–no one wasn't able to say anything for a while.

「Ritta, are you sane?」

「If we fail at only this much, then the name of our Avangard Kingdom will die out, you know?」Ritta cheerfully smiled at the worried Irin.

Kirkton silently nodded and stepped back, leaving the vanguard to Ritta.

From the vast floor of the entrance and the continuing narrow passageways, we watched Ritta's fight on the wide floor.

However, the monster that appeared was more than what we imagined.

The rock monster advanced towards us in the narrow passage while bending over. Every time one of its two feet took a step foward, a rumbling shook the cave. The uneasy soldiers, with their weapons on hand, backed off.

Kirkton, seeing that monster, grabbed Ritta's shoulders and hurled her backwards. Ritta, who raised a tiny scream "Kya", rolled over on the ground.

I immediately understood what kind of opponent it was that he had to do that.

【The Robust King of Caves has appeared! HP 2850】

「I-It's a floor monster!」

Someone shouted it and at the same time, everyone readied their weapons.

A Rock humanoid–an expression that suited such monster. It's not like a beast which pants in excitement, but rather trudges forward in an inhuman matter, passing forward through the narrow passage.

「Retreat outside! This monster's opponent is me!」

「Kirkton, it's fine. I will-….」

「It's not something that I need your help!」

「Captain, I told you to let me do it.」

「Didn't I tell you to retire back, didn't you hear that, Ritta!?」

Not listening to Kirkton's order, Ritta, carrying her spear, walked towards the rocky monsters with unsteady steps. Once again, Kirkton tried to throw Ritta back, but at that time, Ritta had already attacked the monster.

【Ritta attacked! The Robust King of Caves received 588 damage! HP 2262/2850】

With Ritta's attack, the monster's shoulder was easily pulverized, dropping one arm onto the ground. Not giving the monster any chance of fighting back, Ritta thrusts with rapid movements.

「kyeeeeeeeeeeee!」

【Ritta attacked! The Robust King of Caves received 421 damage! HP 1841/2850】

【Ritta attacked! The Robust King of Caves received 579 damage! HP 1262/2850】

【Ritta attacked! The Robust King of Caves received 390 damage! HP 872/2850】

【Ritta attacked! The Robust King of Caves received 488 damage! HP 384/2850】

The whole body of the monster was scraped off by Ritta. Now, it's was barely standing on its 2 legs. The one whose mouth had dropped opened wasn't only me. Everyone here had no words towards that fight.

「Oh my? Is this possibly the atmosphere it gives off when it isdying? Captain~ please look at me, ok?」(IcedTea: F**king notice me SENPAI!!!!!!!!)

With her back facing the dying monster, Ritta stuck out a peace sign towards Kirkton, who was still holding onto his two swords, astonished. Then, she turned around, and at the same time, the monster's head was smashed in as if being mowed down.

The fight ended.

【Ritta attacked! The Robust King of Caves received 401 damage! The Robust King of Caves has been defeated! HP 0/2850】

The leftover body crumbled down, and then it became sand, leaving no trace of its presence.

「Yay~ I did itttt! Aren't I really strong!? Ehehehehehehehehehehehe~」

Holding onto her spear and spinning around on one foot, Ritta was drunk on victory, but no one was able to offer her any words of congratulations.

As she rotated her spear and took various poses, Ritta soaked in the hymn of her victory.

Chapter 50 The Girl That Didn't Have It End

◆Avangard Kingdom: Training Grounds◆

For an instant, I felt like I saw the Spear Ritta was holding glow. All us were taken aback, but before long, Kirkton started doing his thing and stood before Ritta.

「Ritta, where did you get that spear?」

「Yes? Oh, who cares where I got it~」

「Answer me.」

「I forgot~」

She rubbed her spear with her cheeks, making it feel like Kirkton's questions were secondary. Irin and Shuri wanted to say something while carefully observing this situation. I wonder if there was something wrong with that spear….and how did Kirkton notice it?

「Surrender your spear to me.」

「No way!」

「Give it to me, that's an order!」

Kirkton put his hand out, but Ritta stuck out her tongue and took a mocking attitude–she is not complying at all. When Kirkton took one step closer, Ritta's facial expression suddenly changed, and she took a defensive stance using her spear as a shield (holding her spear out diagonally).

Her eyes felt pitch black, making me unable to feel life within it. Even though she was laughing earlier, her expression changed as if her soul had been extracted, and she began screening Kirkton (blocking his movements).

「Ritta, what does this mean?」

「Captain Kirkton, taking this spear from me, what are you planning? Are you saying that I should go back to being Ritta the weakling again? 」

「Didn't you know about weapons that give its owner power in exchange for their body and soul? You may not notice it, but after yesterday, this morning, and right now, you are worn out. If this goes on, you will die, you know? So pass that spear over now!」

「Captain Kirton, you don't like me, right? That's why you slapped me with all strength yesterday, right?」

Only after she said that did I notice that one side of her cheeks looks like it has thinned a bit.

Kirkton, who noticed this slight, felt his expression change slightly.

Shuri fixed her glasses into position, and once again stared at Ritta.

「Ritta-chan, it's best to follow what Kirkton sai-」(Roel)

「Shut up!! Everyone is just making fun of me!」

Even Roel, who timidly talked to her, was also rejected.

Those lightless eyes dully drifted past me, Kirkton, and the other soldiers. She rotated her spear with one-hand like it was part of her arm. It's a battle stance, a position that says she won't let anyone take one step closer to her.

Kirkton sighed as he gave up, and then drew his two swords from his waist.

「If you are going to continue in this stubbornness, then even if it's unreasonable, I will snatch it away.」

「Just as I thought, Captain hates me. Even though I am desperately doing my best, no one would recognize me for it. I'm not that much of an idiot; I know what that everyone was laughing at me secretly. Even Captain thinks that I have no prospects, so he considers me a nuisance. That's why you are going to kill me here, right?」

The atmosphere in the tunnel froze abruptly while the spear sucked in a black aura from Ritta's body.

The soldier who had backed away, and those soldier who had mocked her in low voices– uneasiness spread through their ranks.

Roel and Ritta's two friends worriedly rushed over to Ritta, but Kirkton obstructed them with his hand.

That Ritta over there is not normal. Even if it's people close to her, she might still kill them. I felt her bloodthirst swell beyond even what I could muster at the moment.

「If you don't have power, you can't protect anything–you can't do anything. Do you understand how I feel?」

「I'll listen to everything you want to say later. Pass over that spear now, or else you will really die, you know!」

「LIES!!!!」

Ritta screeched in a voice like that of a different person and thrust her spear towards

Kirkton with the intent to kill. Easily evading it, Kirkton counter-attacked by pulling on the spear shaft. And, using that opening, her closed in on her…….but the spear mowed through the air towards him again, driving him away.

Kirkton evaded with a back step while Ritta slowly approached him, closing their distance.

That black aura — I felt like I've seen it somewhere before.

But, even more than my suspicion toward the spear, I can't help but feel uneasy about this situation. There's Ritta's sudden change…..but above all, there are her two friends who are watching her, looking very worried. Irin was getting teary eyed while not letting Ritta out of her sight.

From Kirkton words, it seems that the spear is driving Ritta mad.

I'll stop it then.

I'll be taking that spear.

「Kirkton, back down.」

「I don't need you help.」

「Listen to me.」

Kirkton seemed to have given up fighting since I'm not going to back down. He put his sword down and stepped back.

Even while looking at me, Ritta is still expressionless, lifeless, as she focused her dead eyes towards me.

「Ritta, let's stop this okay. Your friends are getting worried.」

「Ryua-san, are you also making fun of me? Even though the only one I believed in was you….」

「Then I want you to believe in me now.」

I know that it's pointless to talk with her. Every time I take a step forward, Ritta steps back while still in combat stance with her spear.

In an instant, I approached her and grasped the black spear. Suddenly appearing right in front of her eyes, it was as if I had teleported, and her body quivered, unable to even attack

me.

Ritta put more power in her hands and tried to wrench her spear away, but I don't have any intentions of letting the spear go.

「Ryua-san, please let go. Why are you doing such horrible things to me?」

「Becoming strong this way has no meaning, you know.」

「I — I am not strong like you. Because I am not strong, I am treated like a fool — I wasn't even able to defeat one monster. That day, the person from the Demonlord Army released a monster towards me — I wasn't able to fight back, you know. If Onii-chan didn't rescue me, who knows what would have happened…..Ryua-san, you don't have any experiences like this…you can't understand how I feel. And yet, you are obstructing me — I am already……I don't know what I should do anymore, you know! I'm a girl that doesn't have anything!!」(9: Well, I think Ryua had it worse, though…)

Tears started to accumulate in Ritta's eyes while trying to get me away from her spear.

I have a lot of things to say, but I want her to understand this one thing. But to teach her that..this spear is a hindrance.

「Ritta, even without this, you can become strong, you know. This spear won't be able to do anything for Ritta. And, even if I'm unable to understand, I think that the two people behind me are different…after all, they are crying for you to that extent.」

I put clenched hard with the hand holding the spear. As the spear started to crack, it bent.

And shattered.

The blade tip rolled onto the tunnel floor, and Ritta, who has parted with the black spear, was released from the black aura.

A strong wind pulsed outward from Ritta, and the soldiers carrying their weapons were blown backward. And in an instant, as if something inside her was released, the light in Ritta's eyes returned.

Ritta collapsed onto the ground like a puppet whose strings snapped.

「R-Ritta!」

Irin and Shuri rushed toward Ritta who stood up weakly. And just as she was about to fall over again, I rushed over and supported her with the other two.

The miasma she had earlier had disappeared, and the Ritta I knew had returned.

「U-um, I….」

「Ritta, I'm sorry. After this, we will share your problems together! 」

「Analysis….doing it seems to have made me lose sight of what's important. I too shall apologize, Ritta.」

「I — I made trouble for everyone….」

Spilling large tears from her eyes, Ritta was supported by her two friends. And no one there could poke fun at the sobbing Ritta.

****

◆Avangard Kingdom: Sickbay◆

「For a while, just give her some time to rest and then there will be no problems.」

It seems that because Ritta was released from the spear at an early stage, there is nothing particularly wrong with her body.

I thought Ruru would need to use Recovery Magic, but she didn't do anything. It looks like Ritta only needs to eat 3 meals a day and rest to recover her vitality….but, overall, it seems that the damage was limited because of their daily training.

Ritta sat on the bed inside the sickbay while Irin and Shuri attend Ritta. If these 2 are here, then there will probably be no problems. (9: no, they will have a threesome when everyone is gone)

「Ritta, are you awake?」

The one who entered the sickbay was Kirkton. By no means he would come over to her to scold Ritta, but I'm a bit worried…

「Captain, I'm sorry, I'm fired, right?」

「Originally with the violations of orders, I would have reported it in the conference, but I shall ignore it. I didn't see anything. 」

「Is it fine…? To do that much for a failure like me…..」

「Right now, focus on recovering. Our conversation can continue after that.」

Saying only that, Kirkton started walking out, but as he approached the door, held onto the door knob.

「When you are perfectly healed, don't overdo it. Hold back especially with your individual training.」

「C-Captain….um, did you know about it?」

Without answering Ritta's question, Kirkton left the room. He didn't get mad at all….on the contrary, I felt like Kirkton recognized Ritta's effort.

「Captain is usually ultra strict, but he looks out properly for us, you know.」

「According to my analysis, if Ritta didn't really have the qualities he wanted, then he would have already driven you out.」

「I-I see….and yet, I even said such words……」

Ritta, who started blushing, once again wiped away her overflowing tears. Irin gently brushed Ritta's head—-seeing made me realize how nice it was to have friends. If there is such a person I could call friend, then it would probably Roel who was crying, touched by this scene.

「*sniffs*, I'm so gwad. Rweally, I'm so gwad.」

「You don't really have to cry that much….」

She is even sniffing her nose.

「According to my analysis, you could say that Captain knows everyone up to their underwear.」

「Geh! That's disgusting! Stop it!」

Leaving those two's jokes aside, I feel like Kirkton was somewhat desperate to do this much. Even without the Floor Monster, thinking about the difference in abilities between each soldier, I think that dungeon is too dangerous for them.

From my impression of their movements, most of them lack combat experience with monsters. Even though, they could just fight the monsters around the castle…..

「Let's go.」

「Yeah, ah, that's right. What about training after this?」

「On the quest document, there is no written time period, you know? The important parts are omitted.」

「Geez, if you know your subordinates' underwear, I'd at least expect him to write it out properly.」

「T-that was a lie for sure….」

For some reason, Roel seems really embarrassed and was holding down her robe.

If he had just left the sickbay, then he should still be around here.

We left the place to search for Kirkton

****

◆Avangard Kingdom: Prime Minister's room◆ (3rd person)

「Fumu, is this that spear? Well then, I shall keep it under my custody.」

Bermund picked up the fragment of the spear and observed it at every angle. If you were to say that he had expertise in this area, that would be wrong. However, there is a certain matter here that must be reported to the Prime Minister first, even before the King.

While having doubts on the reason why, Kirkton abided by it.

「Let us pass this to the analysts. And even though I'm saying that, Kirkton, you have an inkling of what is going on, am I right? To be able to make such a finely crafted weapon with such a high curse, the truth is that there is only one person in the world who could make this…」

「There are many ways for this weapon to have been picked up…..I believe it is hasty to think that it was the work of the Death Weapon's Dealer.」

「Did you not hear from Ritta's story? Moreover, to think that for someone whose existence seemed to have vanished ten years ago, and all of a sudden, today, he showed his tail. And after the raid a few days ago. this, Isn't it suspicious?」

「Are you saying that the Death Weapon's Merchant is connected that bunch?」

Not answering that question, Bermund played with fragment of the spear in one of his hands and shook his head. It may had been a hasty conclusion, but Kirkton too believed that it was the case. The tournament entree Kweed–the sword he had carried too had been proven by the analysts to have been made by the Dealer.

The Death Weapon's Merchant, a mysterious person who spread extremely dangerous weapons up until 10 years ago. His goal is unknown and his identity also. Hearing from the people who received his weapons, there were those who claimed it was a manl there were those who said it was a woman–and so not even a trail was left.

A large amount had already lost their lives due to the curses of these weapons.

To think that the person had once again appeared here, Kirkton became irritated at his own

negligence.

「You are not responsible for this.」

As if seeing through Kirkton's mind, Bermund declared so. That face full of wrinkles—-Kirkton still did not know how to face the Prime Minister. Even he, who boasts a long military career, can't raise his head against the Prime Minister.

「Good grief. It looks like there is much more to come until the peace reigns within this kingdom. Really….」

Towards the Prime Minister who had a loathsome expression, "If you will excuse me…" Kirkton left the room.

****

◆Avangard Kingdom: Inside the Castle◆ (Back to Ryua)

「Ah, found him!」

No matter how much we looked for him, we couldn't find…..I wonder which room he was in. And as he was leaving that castle, I was about to call out to him, but for an instant, I hesitated. That face was something he never showed during training–a tense face.

I wonder if something bad happened?

「Huh? Y-you girls. So you even came in here. Just when did come in?」

「J-just now. Is something the matter?」

「No, its nothing…..」

For some reason, Kirkton was flustered. Both Roel and I exchanged glances while in doubt and then asked him about the quest documents.

「I apologize; I have been careless. The training ends today. From the start, it was just a way to put life in my subordinates. I shall report it to the guild. But more than that, I want to apologize for what happened today. To be helped once again…..」

「Don't mind it.」

「Is that so, then that is good….」

Suddenly talking so fast, and suddenly feeling relieved…..there is something weird about him. Maybe he is tired. If so, then talking to him now would be wrong. We had said our thanks and left the place.

「Didn't Kirkton-san seem weird?」

「Yeah, but I think he is just tired, for sure. Even I was really tired after the matter with Ritta.」

「Then, let's go back to the inn. I hope the repairs for the ship will be done soon.」

Ritta who had that black spear, and then the Kirkton today. There is something familiar about it, but thinking about it didn't get me anywhere, so it just disappeared from my head. More importantly, we need to hurry up and go to Wizard Kingdom. I still haven't gotten any clues about the info that I want.

If I meet this Sage Hust, would I be able learn something? I wonder if Tolppo is doing fine?

While having thoughts of the unknown land in my chest, let's sleep on this warm bed.

————————————————————————————-

◆Xin Report◆ (AKA kanji-less hell) (Brand new segment: Courtesy of the Author)

(9: Well, Xin is a character that appeared in the demonlord meeting: the clown fairy or something. She will be writing reports like this starting from this chapter. Everything is written in hiragana and kana, which is basically to a child's handwriting, so I will translate some words as purposely misspelled to reflect that.)

(IcedTea: I refused to edit this one. That way, you can see it in its pure unadulterated glory. You can also see how hard 9 tried to keep it close to the original—-and how little sense it makes. I'll start editing it next time?)

——Starting Here———

showtening it to xinrepo!

Ryua's ecorogy← i dunno (9: xin wrote i dunno not me)

Part 1

——

name is Ryua

name of her comwad is Roel

Roel calls Ryua Ryua-chan owlder guys cawll her with kun, maybe she is cawlled in many ways

her favowiit food is i don't know she dericiousrly eats evewything

the food she hates is mostwy vegetavles when she puts it in Roels plate roel gets mad and say to her eat it properry Ryua get depwessed

twoday she is dowing a solders cowch training she says hyuu or shyuu she teeches them in stewpid words

i think she is not that smwart

she saw a wooman solder being scolded if they are scowlded then you shoold just liv them arown it seems Ryua has a kind pershonality.

Twoday she is gowing to boght a wepon

she chows a cheap wepon

she dos not have enough moni it seems

she is cwose friends with the wooman solder the wooman solder looks like she likey likey ryua

hyuman relayshon is good

Twoday is Misril mines

dere wer many solders

the captane with a long hed is as always mad

it sims that Ryua dos not like it

when i sii her fays she looks in bad mood

the friend wooman solder defeated the froor monsta

dat spear it is provably that guy who maid it

when we toght that he is not dere he was just hir that loiterrring guy

ryua stoppd the mad wooman solder

it wownt breik even if a hundred king elephant ryds on it that guy's spir was brooken

she is stewpid but her power is dangerus

i kinda get it dat dows three getting defitted

「phew, i think this is gine~. really, The great Maou-sama's right hand is why do i have to do this….just have that old man marrionatte do it.

ah, i'm tired I'm tired. good night~」

Monster Encylopedia:

【The Robust King of Caves】

It is said that vengeful spirits had possesed the rocks inside the cave and made it a monster.

It's nature is not understood well.

It has a normal pattern of melee fighting; however, it has high physical and magical resistance, so adventurers who look down on it either have their skulls crushed or scurry home exhausted.

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